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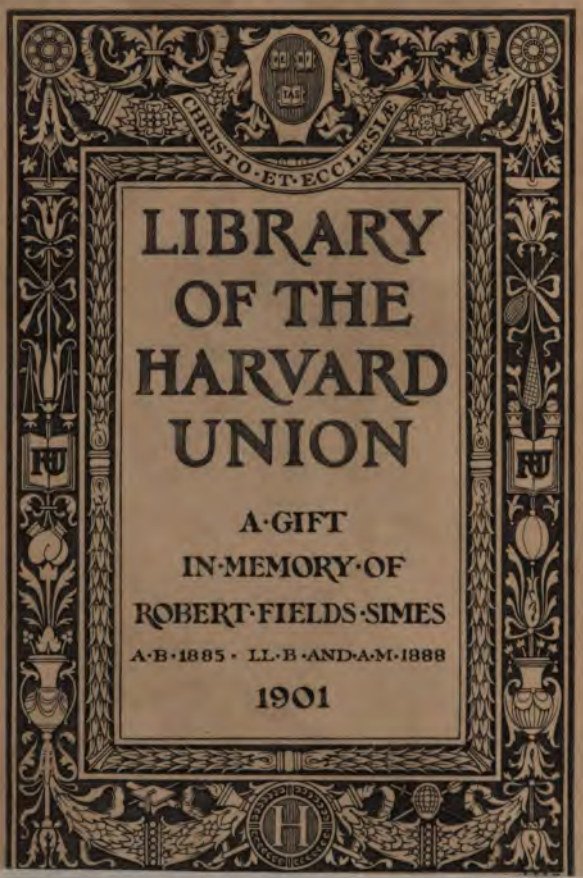

TRANSFERRED
TO
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LI

WILLIAM WETMORE STORY

AND HIS FRIENDS

J. J. Waddington Sc.

Yours faithfully
W. W. Story

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WILLIAM WETMORE STORY

AND

HIS FRIENDS

FROM LETTERS, DIARIES, AND RECOLLECTIONS

BY

HENRY JAMES

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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MIDDLE ROMAN YEARS

CONTINUED

WILLIAM WETMORE STORY AND HIS FRIENDS.

VII.

SIENA AND CHARLES SUMNER.

THE Storys spent in 1857 the first of the several summers they were to spend at Siena, but this one passed without the company of the Brownings, which on other occasions they were to have there. Siena, like the Baths of Lucca (where, with Robert Lytton, of their former party, the Brownings again spent the August and September of 1857), is peopled for us to-day with wandering shades—impalpable phantoms of lightly-dressed precursors that melt, for every sense, into the splendid summer light, when, on the chance of making them confess by some weak sign to acquaintance, we take our way out of

one of the open gates (great mouths in the old walls, overbrowed as with high pink foreheads,) to the region of the haunted villas. How can one hope to find the right word for the sense of rest and leisure that must in olden summers have awaited here the consenting victims of Italy, among ancient things all made sweet by their age, and with Nature helping Time very much as a tender, unwearied, ingenious sister waits upon a brother, heavy of limb and dim of sight, who sits with his back against a sun-warmed wall. The lurking shades at present, on the spot, in the places they occupied and that must have changed ever so little, melt, for every sense, into the actual splendid light, the mere happy, indifferent, oblivious luxuriance of garden, vineyard and podere, into the shimmer of olive-slopes, the tangle of orchards and cornfields and long-armed flowers, springing up like embracing girls—the blaze of blue, the glow of tawny yellow and iridescence of far away violet. Strange and special the effect, in Italy, of the empty places (and there are many) that we stand and wonder in to-day for the sake of the vanished, the English poets; the irresistible reconstruction, to the all but baffled vision, of irrecoverable presences and aspects, the conscious, shining, mocking void, sad somehow with excess of serenity. There is positively no

great difference between the impression of the Lerici of Shelley, that of the Ravenna of Byron, that of the painted chamber of Keats by the Spanish Steps in Rome, and the great, bright, vacant, yet all so solemn smile with which, one July morning, not long ago, the cluster of Sienese villas met my unanswerable questions. These questions — which were, for one's self, about William Story and Robert Browning and Walter Savage Landor, and other spirits of the general scene not here to be named — renewed, in their vanity, renewed, on the high terraces meant for soft evenings and in the cool bare echoing rooms where shutters were pulled open for me to violet views, that pang, not so much of accepted loss as of resented exclusion, of which the other more or less violated shrines had pressed the spring. There they still stand, at any rate, the old cool houses — Meschatelli, Belvedere, Spanocchi-Sergardi, Alberti, Gori, Borghese — on their communicating slopes, behind their overclambered walls and their winding, accommodating lanes; there they stand in the gladness of their gardens (congruous haunts of delightfully-named young gardeners, Adone and Narciso,) and in that wondrous mountain ring which seems to contract and expand as, with the time of day and the state of the air, colour deepens or swoons.

And there, at its distance, on its admirable deep-plunging ramparts—a presence as felt, perpetually, as marked for your spiritual economy as that of some great reduced personage on a prolonged visit to you would be for your domestic and social—stands the hard old fighting, painting, dwindling city, even yet as embattled for the eye, even yet as buttressed and bristling and frowning, with its tallest sharp tower in the sky, as some girt and armoured warrior who forever shakes his spear.

The Storys were in *villeggiatura* at the date of the following.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story.

"Florence, *July 22nd*, 1859.

. . . "Our business is to keep what we have gained, and I don't know so likely a way as by getting our share in your pleasant Siena cool and quiet. Will you have the goodness to engage for us the Bargagli villa from August 1 to September 30? We must pay 35 francs a month if they won't take 30; you will do for us what you can, and we cheerfully abide by your bargain. We bring our own plate and linen.

"I am vexed at what you tell me of poor Mr Landor: I write to him, under cover to you,

and will, if I can, prevent him doing anything so foolish as going to Viareggio. I had no notion of his meaning to go to Siena till he told me he had written to you: he would hear of no other plan. Now, through the happiest of chances, he finds exactly all and far more than he wanted, and he begins scheming in this fruitless way. His family take no notice of his letters, and, till I hear from England, which I hope to do every day, I cannot be sure that his agent or relatives will advance him a farthing. He must at all events stay till his means are assured, and were they ever so abundant he is manifestly unfit to be trusted alone. Nor can I engage to go about with him and be responsible for what happens — as to a certain degree I might in Siena. If Mr Landor is in earnest in preferring any 'two rooms,' with simple board, to living with his family, that arrangement may be made; but Viareggio, &c., are 'not in the programme.' I will make this as plain to him as is consistent with the delicacy of communication that he requires, and, no doubt, he will acquiesce. What a load you have imposed on yourself, in your generosity; but you shall not long remain unrelieved of it, be assured. He will show you the letter I write."

To which this is complementary.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story.

"FLORENCE, *July 28th*, 1859.

"I wrote to you hurriedly the day before yesterday; since then two most kind communications have reached us from your villa. I told you that Forster had written energetically begging me to take every care of Landor till he could make new arrangements with the brothers and agents; the serious illness of the latter being all that prevented the matter from being very speedily terminated. I wrote on the same day to Mrs —— demanding in a mildly-gruff way clothes, books, plate, pictures, residue of cash; in short all that poor Landor, by a note just received, desired me to obtain through the good offices of the Commissary of Police. However, diplomacy being more efficacious than frank fighting, I simply wrote, as I say, and yesterday was favoured by a visit from Mrs ——, all butter and honey (save an occasional wasp's sting overlooked in the latter when she occasionally designated our friend as 'the old Brute!'). The end is she gives up all we require; the clothes this very day to Mr Kirkup, the rest as soon as possible. I will bring them with me, and the note I enclose may set our poor friend's

mind at rest on that point. But it will also serve another purpose, I trust—induce him to take that lodging you were so fortunate as to place at his disposal. Of your own goodness and generous hospitality you will not let me speak, nor is it necessary; but it *is* necessary, not on your account at all so much as on his own, that Landor should now fairly try the experiment which he was bent on making, and show whether he can indeed live independently of the immediate superintendence of his family. The question is not which of his friends will be happy and ready to entertain him as a guest, but whether he can ever be anything else; which Mrs —— very emphatically denies. I should certainly like to see how he sets about it, and I strongly press on him in the note the necessity of taking those lodgings for a single month and finding how he likes the way of life he was determined to adopt. In a month we shall know exactly what his means are, and can contrive how they may be turned to the best account. He must try *now*, because a failure can be easily redeemed. Had I supposed he would stay with you more than a day, I should have made quite other arrangements. . . . We mean to go to Siena the first day that my wife is able to make the effort; she is decidedly better, but still very

weak. We mean to be as happy as possible for these coming two months, and therefore, to avoid any precipitation and mistake we will go to Siena, attack the triangle of villas in succession, armed with those capital plans, and establish my wife to her mind—as I know will be soon done. Let us once arrive, and the rest will be an easy matter."

But he writes again before starting.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story.

[1859.]

"My wife has been so ill, and the calls on my time so incessant, that I was unable to tell you—what would have pleased you to know two days earlier—that I have had a very satisfactory letter from Forster, kind and conclusive. He will make every effort to help poor Landor, and entertains no doubt of being able to do so effectually; he energetically bids me hold *himself* responsible for all expense, insists on Landor's finding every comfort, an attendant, and other assistance I will tell you about when we meet; but adds that he is sure there will be no need of any such effort on the part of any friend, as the brothers of Landor, with whom he will put himself in immediate communication, are most

'noble, honourable gentlemen, and wealthy to boot, and will never bear indignity to their family's head.' They have all been under the delusion that the Fiesole people used the greatest kindness to our poor friend, spared no effort to make him at his ease, &c. The greatest inconvenience is that Mr Walter Landor, of Rugely, the cousin-agent, is seriously ill, dying in fact, and this may a little retard matters; but that eventually a satisfactory arrangement will be made we need not doubt, and meantime he and other friends just as zealous will gladly take all the engagements that may be necessary. I have communicated so much of this as seemed needful to Landor, beseeching him to possess his soul in peace and quietness—as your goodness to him indeed makes a very easy matter.

"And now, dear Story, the moment my wife can be moved to Siena we shall take the journey; but as there is a stop in our negotiations about [our quarters] let me profit by it to beg dear Mrs Story will let us know, before we decide, what I overlooked in my usual stupid way for the grounds and groves and other external beauties. My wife is tenacious of a ground floor—no stairs to ascend: now which of the three at our discretion is the *stairless* villa? I am able to satisfy her about the

coolness and picturesqueness of situation, but I forget the rest. Can you help us again without finding the bore too exorbitant?"

The help, it is needless to say, was given, and the following, from Florence, in the autumn, was after the event.

Robert Browning to Mrs Story.

[Florence, 1859.]

. . . "You need not be told how entirely we owe you the delightful summer we have spent at Siena. Its one fault was its briefness. Ba is hardly so well as when she was let thrive in peace and quiet in that dear old villa and the pleasant country it hardly shut out. She is forced to see more people and talk oftener than suits her. I am very anxious to get away, and see no obstacle to our doing so by the end of the first week in November, when Mr Landor will be finally established in his winter quarters. We are papering and carpeting and doing things superiorly. He is quite well; as gentle and affectionate as ever; and I shall regret his loss more than there is any use in dwelling upon, now that it must be. Ba enters the room at this moment, saying 'I wish we were in Rome!' Tell us, for we count on your goodness, the day

you expect to be there, and, when you get there, any news about houses, sunny ones, and prices of the same: in short, as usual, trouble yourselves infinitely for the sake of us poor do-nothings-in-return."

To which Mrs Browning adds—

"Yes, I am very anxious to go to Rome. Nothing keeps us but the Landor necessity. The air here (since it has turned to damp) and too much talking make me feel more *unsound* than I have done lately, and the prophesied-of massacre at Rome (toward the imagination of which Dall' Ongaro contributed poetically two evenings ago) does not alarm me so much as thoughts of the tramontana. The Venetian poet threatened us also on other points. But I am steadfast in the faith that things are going excellently. Let us pray that the Pope and his Antonelli won't give up an inch. The danger is that they give up. Will nobody help the Pope away? My kingdom for a horse, or rather a mule, or rather a boat from Porto d'Anzio. Then the emperor's last promise to the Tuscan delegates that there should be no intervention — *neppure Napoletano* — is worth something."

We have meanwhile Story's brief account of the summer.

W. W. Story to Charles Eliot Norton.

"VILLA BELVEDERE, SIENA, *Aug. 6th*, 1859.

. . . "Walter Savage Landor has been staying with us here for the last three weeks. The poor old man, you may remember, . . . left England and made a reconciliation, . . . and there at his villa (in Florence) with them he has been staying for a twelvemonth. . . . He was finally forced to leave the villa and take refuge in an inn in Florence. There Browning found him and brought him to Siena, he having expressed a wish to find a little cheap apartment here. Having previously written to me for information as to the villas and houses on lease, he came at once to me, and I persuaded him to stay; so shocked was I at the whole story of ingratitude which he told me and which Browning fully confirmed. He looked very much broken down when he came, but a cheerful life, with nobody to irritate him and plenty of fresh air, have made a new man of him, and he has taken a villa in the neighbourhood, where he will remain until we leave for Rome. It is a noble structure of a mind,

spacious and perfect still in all its main parts. Here and there are cracks and flaws, and the gigantic memory has begun to crumble away, but the great imposing edifice shows much of a grand front. The old man is still strong, though he has completed eighty-four years and looks back on a long space. Up early in the morning, he reads and sometimes writes Latin Alcaics, and since he has been here he has fired several Latin bombs into Louis Napoleon's camp. He is as stout for liberty as ever, a great friend to Garibaldi and a real lover of Italy. We hope still to have imaginary conversations from his pen, as we have real conversations from his mouth. We have found him most amiable and interesting, with certain streaks of madness running through his opinions, but frank and earnest of nature and a hater of injustice. He tells us stories of past times, past men and past actions, and we are sorry to lose him at last, after the long discourse, looking before and after, that we have had. He is now publishing a new volume containing his Hellenics and additional new poems.

"Browning too is at a stone's throw from us, and every evening we sit on our lawn under

the ilexes and cypresses and take our tea and talk until the moon has made the circuit of the quarter of the sky. He is well and full of life as ever, but poor Mrs Browning is sadly weak and ill. She is intensely interested in Italian affairs, and, as you know, believes in Louis Napoleon. When the news of the peace of Villafranca came she was very much overcome by it, and, having unfortunately taken cold by some imprudent exposure, she has been utterly prostrated. We think she has passed the dangerous crisis and is slowly moving on towards health; but still she is terribly weak, so that she cannot walk across the room, and is afflicted by a racking cough which often robs her of sleep by night. I have seen her only once since she left Florence, for she cannot talk, and every excitement must be avoided. When she came up she was carried in arms to the carriage and thence to the house, and looked like a dark shadow. Browning is in good spirits about her and has no fears now. Pen is well, and as I write I hear him laughing and playing with my boys and Edith on the terrace below my window."

I find among my documents in relation to this period two groups of careful and vivid

notes by Mrs Story, to which I cannot do better justice than by giving them in their order and mainly as they stand—that is with few omissions—and with the application to both of the heading borne, in faded ink, by the one which is apparently the later in date.

"RECOLLECTIONS OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR; WITH AFTER-DINNER TALK AT SIENA.

"We first made Mr Landor's acquaintance at Bath, where we were introduced to him by Mr Kenyon. He was living there by himself, away from his family, who were in Italy. We found him extremely cordial and kind, and he induced us by his pressing invitation to pass most of our time with him. He had his walls lined with paintings of no great value, I believe, but bearing high-sounding names of the Italian schools. He was a fierce believer in things and people who interested him, and a most violent denouncer of whatever didn't. He inveighed against his wife and against his children, but on the other hand told us the story of his love for Rose Aylmer. He was altogether most brilliant and entertaining.

"Later on, at Siena, when we were living at Villa Belvedere, we were surprised by a visit

from him.[1] He arrived one sultry morning with Browning, looking very old, and almost as shabby and dusty and miserable as a beggar. Browning had helped him to get away from Florence, from great complications with his belongings there, and had brought him to us and to the perfect peace of Siena. He made us a long visit and was our honoured and cherished guest. During the time he was with us his courtesy and high breeding never failed him; he was touchingly pleased and happy with our life, and so delightful and amusing that we ourselves grieved when it came to an end. When the Brownings, who had taken the Villa Alberti, about half a mile distant from us, arrived to stay, a small villa close to them was then engaged for him. To this he went, and

[1] . . . "One hot summer day towards noon his wife and children turned him out of doors, with some 15 pauls in his pocket, on the burning highway, and told him to be off and never to come back. He was then past 80; and he wandered down to Florence a broken-down, poor, houseless old man. There straying aimlessly about the hot streets, exhausted and ill, he had the good fortune to meet Mr Robert Browning, who was to him a good angel and who took him under his protection and did everything he could to make him comfortable and happy. Shortly after this Browning brought him to me at Siena, and a more pitiable sight I never saw. It was the case of old Lear over again; and when he descended from his carriage with his sparse white hair streaming out, and tottered into my house dazed in intellect with all he had suffered, I felt as if he were really Lear come back again."—Story's "Conversations in a Studio."

the legend presently grew that on the very day of his arrival he in a fit of anger with his landlady threw his dinner, plates and all, out of the window. [It has been variously related, of many of Landor's dinners, of many windows. It was a rate at which he must often have fasted, apart from his bill for crockery.] We constantly met him at Villa Alberti, and he often came to us, with the Brownings, for afternoon tea on the terrace. On Edith's birthday he came in his best attire, wearing a wonderful gay flowered waistcoat which, long years before, had been a present from Count D'Orsay. His laugh was a surprising inharmonious burst of sound with no merriment in it. I seem to hear it now in sharp quick discords.

"His habit of work was so strong in him that even then, when it might be called his holiday of old age, he got up early in the morning, before the rest of us, before even the servants were astir, and went out under the cypresses to write Latin verses, which he read to W. at breakfast. His memory for the far distant time was extraordinary; he gave us details of incident and talk that had occurred in those years, with the greatest certainty and delicacy, while the 'middle distance' was lost in a cloud and the foreground, the present immediately about us,

appeared to make little impression on him. His judgments of *our* artists and authors were good for nothing, as they were all the prejudice of the moment, rash and intemperate; but those he had formed in the past showed the finest perception about men and things, and he could recall them as if written in a book and learned by heart. What he most cared for was his Latin verses; at that time he seldom wrote in English—only a verse or two of satire and spleen. As we sat on the terrace with our beautiful view the interesting hours flew by, full of wit and sense and all sorts of noble things. Mrs Browning was often convulsed with laughter at his scorching invective and his extraordinary quick ejaculations, perpetual God-bless-my-souls, &c.! But I find it too difficult to record the strange charm of his talk. His stories were admirably told, full of point and often of pathos. His mention of Rose Aylmer — and he often mentioned her—always brought the tears to his eyes, if not to ours; for there with her he had evidently buried his heart. The marriage he made was to do nothing for his happiness. . . . So it was that in extreme old age he was driven out in utter poverty, with barely sufficient to support life. To the last he couldn't resist the impulse to attack and fight—to fight out with

them (his family), and with everybody, his points of difference. But he was full of generous instincts too, and having nothing to give, gave liberally; offering for instance several times his so-called Titians and Raphaels to W., and trying, later on, to force them *en masse* upon Browning, who of course didn't accept them."

The talk we may imagine to have fallen from Landor on the Siena terrace in the summer nights must atone by its vivacity for its disconnectedness, and perhaps even in a few cases for our impression of having already and elsewhere caught its echo.

"Lord Ward once paid me the highest compliment. Somebody took a book of mine to read him when he was ill. 'Oh, don't talk of books!' he said; but my friend managed to read him one of the 'Imaginary Conversations,' that of Cicero with his brother. 'Well,' said my friend when he had finished, 'don't you think that's exactly what Cicero would have said?' 'Very much,' said Lord Ward, 'if he could.'

"Our old housekeeper, Mrs Lockington, fell ill when she had been in our house 43 years, and my dear sister Elizabeth used often to go to see her. One day she went over and found

her groaning and very bad. 'Well, Mrs Lockington,' said she, 'what's the matter?' 'Oh Lord,' says old mother Lockington, 'I've got such a beating of the heart, Miss, that I can hear it the other side of the room.' 'Now Elizabeth,' said I to my sister, 'I don't believe that. How could you keep from laughing?' 'Why,' said she, 'I did almost laugh out, but I don't always laugh in people's faces, as you do, Walter.'

"Keats is perhaps the most *wonderful* poet the world ever saw. There are other greater ones, but none so wonderful—and none more so. They may talk of Chatterton. Well, he *was* extraordinary; but he was nothing to Keats, for Keats was simply a Greek. Wordsworth said that the Hymn to Pan was 'a pretty piece of Paganism'; but if Wordsworth had lived to a hundred, and then had the advantage of a long residence in heaven, he never could have written 'Hyperion.' You may take the what-do-you-call-it?—'Excursion'—and find a dozen idylls in it, but who can read it straight through? I did so once, but it was a labour of Hercules. He once paid me, however, a pretty compliment. He was a malicious person—I had heard of his malice, and we were talking of Southey. I said I thought he was a much greater poet than

Byron—that Byron had more vigour than imagination. 'Well,' says Wordsworth, 'that's exactly what I've always thought. I never said so perhaps, in so many words, but it was always in my mind.' My friend Count Lecci said when he saw the three Wordsworths together, the poet, his wife and his sister, 'The Lord of heaven never himself made three such ugly people, and it's a satire on him to suppose he did.'

"Crabbe Robinson bored me to death with his German talk. I said I hated the language, and he said that if I knew it and understood it I should be delighted with it. Goethe alone, he said, would repay me for the trouble of learning it. 'His epigrams,' says he, 'you're fond of epigrams.' I told him I didn't care a farthing for 'em. I said I knew many Latin and Greek ones—also many French ones that were better by far than either. He repeated to me one of Goethe's, saying it was wonderful. When he had finished I said 'Where's the epigram?' 'What, don't you see it?' says Crabbe. 'Well then, here's this one;' and he tried me with another. 'I don't call *that* an epigram either,' said I. 'No? Good Lord, then I've done.' 'Thank God,' said I.

"Trelawney told me that when Byron was once in company with some one who praised

something of mine he at first assented, but after a while said, 'The devil's in me if I like *any* of his things.' When Trelawney told me this I said, 'He's right—the devil *is* in him.' Trelawney was a great liar. I once said to him, 'You've said so-and-so in your book.' 'I didn't, did I?' says he; 'I don't think so, at any rate.' 'Yes,' said I, 'you did, and I can show it to you.' 'Sure enough,' says he. 'Well, I'm damned. But it's true, for all that.'

"I once heard Sheridan, Pitt, Fox and Burke speak at one sitting of Parliament. Sir Robert Adair took me. Pitt had a magnificent voice. Fox screeched and screamed. Sheridan was splendid. But Burke was the finest of all—yet with the House quite inattentive. Somebody said, 'There gets up that great fool Wilberforce' —he was a very mild-spoken man.

"I once sat next Lady Stowell at dinner, and I asked her to take wine, after trying to engage her in talk. 'For the love of God let me alone and don't bother me so, Mr Landor,' says she; 'I don't know what I'm eating.' 'Well, my lady,' said I, 'you're a long time making the acquaintance': for she ate like a tiger and in great quantity. . . . Don't suppose I'm proud of my family (when speaking of its antiquity). I'll tell you what it is. I don't care a farthing for any

of my ancestors, and I'm the cleverest of all of 'em; so now you may believe I'm not very proud of 'em. Old Wheeler the counsellor dined often with my father and swore horribly. Vulgar habit it is—that's luckily done away with. I could see my aunt jump in her chair when he came out with his horrid words. At last he said something very bad, and I burst out laughing to see her. 'What the devil in hell are you laughing at?' says he, naming not only the *padrone* but the locality too.

"Queen Caroline died of taking medicine without advice. She was always taking it, for she was half dead with the drink she took—a bottle of madeira and one of champagne at dinner. Lady Hood told me she came one day to the Palace and the Queen said, 'I'm quite sick, and I've just taken some magnesia, but it doesn't do me any good.' 'Well,' said Lady Hood, who was a great fool, 'try a little castor oil.' The Queen took it, and as castor oil, or any oil, and magnesia mixed, make a hard cement, it killed her. I know this for a fact, for the Queen's medical man told it me.

"When I read Chaucer I feel as if I were in the fresh, open air, but when I read Spenser I feel as if I were shut up in a room full of perfumes. I admire Molière more than any writer

of comedies except perhaps Aristophanes; but Corneille, Racine——! Think of a nation that calls An-dro-ma-che Andromaque. I once said to a French lady who was extolling Corneille, 'Oh yes, I like his comedies next to Molière's.' 'His comedies? Grand Dieu, what d'ye mean?' says she. 'Yes,' says I, 'all his tragedies are comedies to me; I die o' laughing over 'em.'

"Hexameters cannot be written in English. Longfellow seems to me never to have read a Greek or Latin poet—at least with any sort of care. Dryden's great ode, Alexander's Feast, I never liked much. 'Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen from his high estate!' Four times is the most a word can be repeated by a poet; only a musician perhaps can do it a fifth time. . . . Franklin was a very good writer. Lord Auckland was to receive him once about some business with the Colonies, and a person who was present at the interview told me that Lord A. stood up all the time and cut short the conversation, bowing out Franklin, who had come in full dress. Franklin went home, took off his fine clothes and smoothed out his grand coat on the bed. 'Lie there. You'll see better days yet, old boy!'

"I met Tom Paine once at dinner—his face blotched and his hand unsteady with the wine he took. The host gave him a glass of brandy

and he talked very well; an acute reasoner, in fact a monstrous clever man. I went at that time into very grand company, but as I was a young man some of my relations who wanted to put me down said, 'Well, we hear you know Tom Paine—Citizen Paine we suppose you call him, with your ideas.' 'To persons with *your* ideas I call him *Mister* Paine,' says I.

"One day at Bath Louis Napoleon, who had a charming house there, came and asked me to dine with Lady Blessington, and I went, finding a capital dinner and rooms most tastefully decorated with flowers. After dinner Lady Blessington and I got into the carriage for a drive, while D'Orsay sat outside with the Prince, who drove —so that, you see, I've been driven by a prince. Louis Napoleon is an extremely clever man, talking well on all subjects. He always wanted me to like the first Napoleon better than I did. I told him I admired the King of Holland more than I did the Emperor. I used to spend a month at Gore House every year. Lady Blessington was a charming, kind, good creature, a great heart. I spent evening after evening with her at Florence and was quite the *ami de la maison.* No truth at all about D'Orsay and Lady B. All a complete lie. I remember she was always bothering me to write my life, and

one evening she said, 'If you'll do it I'll get Colburn to give you 600 guineas for it to-morrow.' 'No,' said I, 'I won't, for a pretty figure some of you ladies would cut in it if I told the truth.'

"I met Mrs Siddons once or twice at the Duchess of Lancaster's; a mighty pompous woman, mighty pompous — but wonderful on the stage, *wonderful.* I knew Mr Kemble, and once in the street he came up and said, 'Or I'm very much mistaken, *or* this is Mr Landor.' 'It is indeed,' said I, 'but who could ever mistake Mr Kemble?' On which he said, to return the compliment, 'Allow me to introduce my friend M. Talma.' So I had some talk with Talma, and told him that I didn't see how they managed in France to break the necks of all their verses so well, and that French poetry had a villainous metre! He was very like Napoleon the Great, had a charming manner and was perfectly a gentleman. Rachel I remember as brought to Gore House by her mother. She was a great creature.

"I once happened to say in a conversation, when out for a walk, that I didn't care what people believed, so they were honest; whereupon a young parson, very forward, said, 'What *do* you believe, Mr Landor?' 'I'll tell ye what

I believe,' said I; 'I believe you're an impertinent young prig of a parson!' 'Well, Mr Landor,' says he, 'I call that personal.' 'I'm not talking over the hedge,' said I (there were some men working in the field close by,) 'I'm talking to *you*.'"

It is only in his own letters—and there but allusively—that I find a record of the visit paid at Palazzo Barberini by a distinguished American visitor in the spring of 1859. Charles Sumner, their friend of many years, was with the Storys at this time from April 20th to May 13th, and he wrote back, after departure, while completely under the charm of his impression. But I like to give first a note they had had from him nearly two years before, written during the early part of the long stay in Europe which remarkable events in America had imposed on him. His health, it will be remembered, had been almost fatally shattered by the furious assault made upon him in the House of Representatives at Washington, in May, 1856, during the now so scarcely credible heat of the Southern campaign for the further extension of Slavery, by his Congressional colleague Brooks of South Carolina. It need scarce be recalled even to the new generations that, on the morrow of Sumner's delivery of an impassioned, somewhat rhetori-

cal, but signally eloquent denunciation of the Southern claims, the perusal of which may still, after these years, stir Northern blood, he was approached by his assailant from behind (while writing, out of session-time, at his desk), and so, taken unawares, struck down with a bludgeon, helplessly floored, and, while unconscious from the force of the first quick blows, mercilessly beaten about the head. The impression of the event, which was like a welt raised by the lash itself across the face of the North, is one that memory has kept, for this careful chronicler, even though the years of a life have overlaid it. I recollect, from far away, the "terrace" of a little ancient house in Paris —a "pavilion" in the Champs Elysées, the site of which has long since ceased to know it; and the sense as of a summer morning on the edge of the wide avenue, then heterogeneous and queer, with other old pavilions, vaguely seen as survivals of old *régimes*, with the Jardin d'Hiver opposite, with a beautiful young Empress to be watched for over the railing of the terrace, with a little Prince Imperial, sublime, divine, driven past in a gilded coach surrounded by brilliant bobbing Cent-Gardes grasping cocked pistols, and, finally, with the slow-coming American papers and the great splash in the

silver lake—the reverberation in parental breasts, in talk, passion, prophecy, in the very aspect of promptly-arriving compatriots, of the news which may be thought of to-day, through the perspective of history, as making the famous first cannon-sound at Fort Sumter but the *second* shot of the War. To very young minds, inflamed by the comparatively recent perusal of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' it was as if war had quite grandly begun, for what was war but fighting, and what but fighting had for its sign great men lying prone in their blood? These wonderments, moreover, were to have a sequel—the appearance of the great man, after an interval, in Paris and under the parental roof, with the violence of the scene, to one's vivid sense, still about him (though with wounds by that time rather disappointingly healed), and with greatness, enough, visible, measureable, unmistakable greatness, to fill out any picture. His stature, his head, his face, his tone—well do I remember how they fitted one's very earliest apprehension, perhaps, of "type," one's young conception of the statesman and the patriot. They were as interesting and impressive as if they had been a costume or a uniform. Mr Sumner was to remain abroad in search of health; with improvements and relapses, experiments and alarms.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"IVREA, *Aug.* 31*st*, 1857.

"I am in Italy and must write to you. Do you know this place? A mountain stream is now rushing under my windows with the noise of Niagara. Two days ago I came over the St Gothard, down Lago Maggiore to Turin, all of which was new to me. I have been tempted as never before, to go still further, to Florence, to you and to Rome; but my brief time would fail me; and so I turn back by the Great-St-Bernard, inspired by 'Excelsior,' the monks and the dogs. The Val d'Aosta I shall traverse to-morrow, alone. . . . Ah! you have a happy time here in Italy—particularly *Dove il 'si' suona.* But seeing my country from abroad gives a new detestation of Slavery and a new determination to fight the battle."

The following also speaks for itself.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"HÔTEL NEVET, MONTPELLIER, *Dec.* 11*th*, 1858.

"You cannot, my dear William, be more surprised at receiving a letter with the above date than I am at writing it. But the physicians have willed it, and I am here. On reaching Paris, after my autumn rambles, there was

a consultation on my case: present Trousseau, the eminent practitioner, Brown-Séquard, my attending physician, and an excellent Dr Hayward. They were unanimous in urging that I should not return to my public duties this winter, and prescribed a treatment which, though painful, is most pleasant in comparison with my tortures by fire. To carry this out under the most favourable circumstances I have left Paris and come to this quiet place, where I devote myself to my health; beginning the day with *ventouses sèches* and *capsules* and *pilules*, and amusing myself by moderate walks and by tranquil society.

"But I turn toward Washington, and every day regret this enforced absence. This of itself is a torment. Two years and a half have passed during which I have had trial of pain, ache and smart of every kind, and at times have halted between the grave and hospital. For two or three days I have felt very well; but on my way here, at Avignon, I was struck by a sudden relapse, which for a while promised to throw me back two years. This seems now to have passed away. But it has left me in great distrust as to my real condition and the amount of fatigue and excitement which I can bear. But for this I should take my flight

at once to America. Next after my seat at Washington is Rome; but to enjoy Rome I must be well, and without a constant care for my health. Besides, you have about you there men who, if not accessories *before* the fact were so after the fact, to an act of assassination or have made themselves its compurgators. . . . Remember me kindly to all friends—especially those who hate Slavery. Ah, what barbarism!"

It was his good fortune to be in Italy at the time of great events, into which no visitor could have entered with a larger sympathy. He paid a visit at Palazzo Barberini in the spring of 1859. That Future in which he had so general a faith—on the whole so easy a confidence—was all in the air and tremendously in the balance. Magenta and Solferino were of this summer. He writes just after leaving Rome.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"*May* 14*th*, '59. On board *Lombardo*.

"It rained, dear William, torrents all the way to Civita Vecchia, and at sea till seven o'clock in the evening, when the sky was bright with moon and stars. There was no American aboard; most were Italians. *Tanto meglio.* The captain,

in reply to my inquiries, tells me that everything is most tranquil at Florence and Leghorn and with *la gente del popolo.* He does not venture yet to say that the Austrians will be chased out of Italy, which I let him know I longed for; but he declares with a good deal of pride that recent events, particularly in Tuscany, have shown the capacity of the Italians to govern themselves. The chief news at Leghorn was the arrival of Louis Napoleon at Genoa, and three days of *festa* thereupon. What I have left undone at Rome haunts me even more than all that I enjoyed. I think perpetually of pictures and statues unseen; but more than this, I am unhappy in beautiful opportunities I let slip. Why did I not press you to go *with* me to the Capitol and the Vatican? And why did I not press Wild to a similar service in the picture-galleries? You know that I am always a learner, and such tutors, with such means, would have added for ever to my knowledge and to my pleasant memories of art. But this is lost. But I have stored away much. Rome now, as when I first saw it, touches me more than any other place. Then I have been so happy with you. Perhaps it will be long before we meet again; but I cannot forget these latter delicious days. The captain promises that we shall arrive

at Genoa at 8 o'clock this evening, where I shall close this scrawl, by telling you what I learn there."

This last promise he handsomely keeps.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"TURIN, *May 18th*, 1859.

. . . "And yet it [the journey from Genoa] was full of interest. At every point where the common road was visible there were French soldiers without number, all daubed with mud and draggling in the rain. Several thousand were sheltered in the station of the railroad at Alessandria. The train, as it entered, seemed to penetrate this living mass; and yet all was order and tranquillity. Nobody knows the counsels of the Emperor. I should think the rain, which had lasted the last three days, must have damaged the enemy much. Their course is one of pillage and robbery. They live upon the people. . . . Yesterday I passed half an hour with the Comte de Cavour. He received me in his bedroom, where he was writing. Let me say that a note which he kindly wrote me in French was in the clear round hand of his country, so different from the French, which is small and flowing like their language. This

national peculiarity of handwriting is curious to observe, particularly in its relation to the languages. He was calm, as if he felt himself master of the situation, and asked me to observe the tranquillity of Turin with not a soldier to be seen. To my inquiry if he thought the Austrians would be driven from Italy this summer he quietly said 'Je l'espère.' And when I dwelt upon the strength of the fortifications at Verona he said that he thought they could be taken. He seemed to understand the condition of things at Rome — that Lady William Russell is *très-autrichienne;* that the people there are right; but as he spoke of the Saint-Père I thought the *subrisus* of his face seemed to expand. It is evident that he does not doubt of the result.

"I've also passed several hours at the house of the Contessa de Coligno and at that of Mme. Arconati. This I owe to Miss Weston; pray let her know how completely her introduction has been honoured. There I learn that everybody is full of confidence and anticipating victory. They say that this is to be their last war and that great armies will no longer be needed. But nobody seems to understand the plan of campaign. All, however, are sure that the Austrians are to be beaten. Mme. de Coligno seemed much moved at the thought of the blood that must be

shed to dispossess the enemy of those immense fortifications. It seems that in the hospitals of Turin is a solitary Austrian soldier, wounded and taken prisoner in a recent skirmish. These humane ladies, who speak German, had visited him, but he could not understand them. He turns out to be a Hungarian. The property of Mme. Arconati is near the Ticino, and of course is now in possession of the Austrians. She describes their conduct as barbarous. But in the present deplorable condition of their finances they can only live by turning highwaymen. . . . Tell our friends they will find Turin more tranquil than a Washington hotel. The Savoyards are showing their monkeys in the streets, the boys playing marbles, the theatres thronged, the table at the hotel served with abundance; although the Austrians are within a few hours of the capital. I have been charmed to learn that Manzoni, who is in his house at Milan under the hoof of the enemy, is Italianissimo. From one of his grandchildren here, Count Bentivoglio, who has called on me, I have learned the sentiments of the distinguished author. The weather is execrable, but I trust it will make the Austrians suffer. Thus far it has prevented me from going to the Superga, where Lord Aberdeen told me he enjoyed the view of the Alps more

than from any other place. To-night I am to meet a party invited expressly to put me *au courant* of events here."

To which the following, late in the evening, is a postscript.

"I have just come from the Marchesa Arconati's, where I have met familiarly a considerable circle, all full of Italy, and I write to let you know in one word the spirit which prevails. Nothing can surpass the courage and hope which I find in all. I cannot say that they seem even to be anxious, so assured are they of the result and so necessary as well as glorious do they regard it. The Austrian ultimatum, which was practically a declaration of war, was welcomed as a solution of their perplexities. Without that they would have been delivered over to the uncertainties of diplomacy. Cavour himself was happy to have the knot cut. The Austrian officer who came on this message is said to have addressed the former in the most courteous terms, assuring him that the message he bore had at least one pleasure for him, as it gave him an opportunity to make the acquaintance of the first statesman of Europe. . . . Turin is a magnificent lordly place, with spacious houses

which make me understand why Alfieri, as he records in his autobiography, found Paris *mesquin* when he first entered it coming from Italy."

He continues his report with characteristic abundance.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"Susa, *May 20th*, 1859.

"Thus far I come, dear William, and to-morrow morning I shall quit Italy. I am unhappy at the thought, for I shall never see it again. My travels will soon end. Rome haunts me perpetually, and I wish to ask you a hundred questions which I forgot. I believe this is my fourth despatch. Since my last I have been in the way of hearing something more of opinion in Turin, particularly from a leading deputy of the gauche. He looks for sympathy from the King-that-will-be of Naples, and counts upon at least a great northern Italian kingdom. I am astonished at the warmth with which the King is spoken of. He is said to be not only the *bien-aimé*, but the *adoré*. He mingles with his people without state or ceremony. Only the other day, when Cavour returned from Paris and a crowd assembled under his windows to cheer him, it is said the King was among them crying

Vive Cavour! But the representatives of the gauche are not strongly attached to Cavour. They say that he has adopted his present opinions as the means of advancing himself, and that he allows no first-rate talent to be associated with him, in the Cabinet, which might impair his pre-eminence. The news has continued to arrive of the barbarous conduct of the Austrians in subsisting their troops at the expense of the provinces where they are. . . . Three cheers for Italy, and may the Austrian empire cease to exist!"

He was again; on leaving Italy, in the hands of the doctors.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"BAINS FRASCATI, AU HAVRE, *Aug.* 11*th*, 1859.

"Your generous letter, after travelling to London, found me here, enjoying seclusion and sea-bathing. Since I wrote you last, great events and changes have occurred. The programme of the Emperor has not been carried out, but much has been done. Look at it. (1) Lombardy wrested from Austria. (2) The Duchies, Parma, Modena and Tuscany, given to themselves; for I assume that this is done. (3) The idea of Italian unity and independence

crowded upon the attention of Europe. (4) New means established in Italy for the support of these ideas. (5) An impulse toward reform throughout all Italy. These are not small conquests. Out of these I hope for the great result. I have recently been reading the 4 vols. of the writings and speakings of Louis Napoleon. Much as I dislike him I confess to having risen from them with a higher idea of his intelligence and of his character. During his exile and imprisonment he occupied himself with topics many of which are intimately associated with human welfare. Two or three of his speeches seem to me masterpieces; particularly that at Bordeaux, where he said l'Empire c'est la Paix, and that where he announced his marriage. But I have been disgusted at seeing his repeated declarations in favour of the Republic followed by its most treacherous assassination. I sympathise with you completely in all your aspirations for dear Italy and grieve with you in her discomfitures. But I doubt not that her good time will come at last. Most happy should I be on your lawn. But do not tempt me. The movement and unrest of travel are not the best conditions for me. I have already passed three weeks in London, where I saw much of the great world; but daily breakfasts and dinners

were not so good for me as my private life here, where I go to bed at nine o'clock. . . . At times I think of starting for Madrid, merely to see its gallery and then turn back. But I say 'Get well, get well, for work next December,' and then I banish all such ideas. Looking only yesterday at the second vol. of the magnificent work entitled 'Moyen Age et Renaissance,' I fell upon the chapter on ships and the drawings of a Spanish caravel in the time of Columbus. I thought what beautiful materials Rogers has for filling up the vacant space about his doors. Remember me to the excellent and noble Brownings."

With all of which he continues the best of correspondents, as well as the most characteristic, surely, of letter-writers. He has, as I have already observed, his *tone*, of which he never any more fails than a great actor fails of that of a great part. Yet he was no actor; he was himself the person represented.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"BAINS FRASCATI, *près du* HAVRE, *Aug.* 15*th*, 1859.

. . . "To-day the wind is strong, and the sea is heavy, and I lose my bath. But this seclusion here is profitable and not unpleasant.

Yesterday, however, I broke away from it to see the entry of the troops, with the Emperor and his marshals—the most remarkable triumph since Paulus Emilius mounted the Capitol on his return from Greece, and I doubt not the most imposing spectacle ever seen in Paris. Why not say in the world? The arrangements and appointments were perfect. I was in a balcony *au premier*, near the corner of the Rue de la Paix and the Boulevard—a most excellent place to see; price of my chair 50 francs!—and I looked closely at all that passed. The Emperor was for some time at the corner near me. He was superbly mounted, and sat his horse well; looked in good health and bronzed by the sun. More than any marshal or general, he held his head down, bowed only occasionally and seemed to crawl along. While near where I was he was occupied in twirling and smoothing his moustache. As he passed there was a hush of silence, and intense curiosity, but no enthusiasm. MacMahon looked more like an American than an Irishman. Canrobert had a joyous look as he turned to the right and left to receive the applause.

"The news from Tuscany is inspiring. Pray help them to be firm. The Brownings must work. The Ducal family has ceased to reign; let this

be the decree. If they consent to take back the son the battle is postponed to another day. In London I met one evening at Lady Granville's the runaway Prince Corsini, and heard him say that he was going to join his Grand Duke. I understand that he announced the ministry that would be formed on the Grand Duke's return to Florence. An amusement of exile! Lady G. asked me if I noticed his most excellent Tuscan. I see by the late papers that 'Roba di Roma' again appears in the 'Atlantic.' Oh, I do love Italy, and wish that I were there, to lap myself in its Elysium. But I shall be in another place, in scenes very different, amidst tobacco-spitting, swearing slave-drivers, abused by the press, insulted so far as is possible, pained and racked by the insensibility about me to human rights and the claims of human nature; finding little true sympathy, but cheered, let me confess, by the dignity of the cause I serve. . . . Did I tell you that I saw H. in London? —once in society, trying to be eloquent, as if with Mrs Ticknor. He seemed so little at ease, so like a *manant*, that I asked if it could be he."

The following was practically his farewell. Theodore Parker, mentioned at the end, as full and eloquent a voice from pulpit and platform

(on the same agitated ground) as Sumner was to remain, or in strictness still further become, in the Senate, reached Italy scarcely less battered and spent with the fray. But, less fortunate, he was not to recover his strength, and in Florence, the next year, he was to sink to rest.

Charles Sumner to Mrs Story.

"Paris, *Oct. 9th*, 1859.

"My paquets are made and in an hour I leave Paris—which never was more beautiful. Latterly I have been devoured by desires which were stimulated in Rome. Here it is choice engravings, bronzes and manuscripts on vellum. The gentle Wild is partly responsible for the bronzes, for he gave me the address of Barbedienne, whose bill runs up to 2500 francs. But my treasures are three MSS. most exquisitely illuminated—superior to anything in all Boston!

. . . "Sartiges, who came to see me yesterday, said that he expected to see me in Paris *au moins dix fois encore!* But I turn my back now upon all such expectations and return to my country and my duties there. In following my career I have indeed a higher pleasure even than in art. But art will cheer the graver life which I pursue.

"It is too true—I cannot write a letter like yours. I am dull and plain. Often with envy I thought of those delicious Tuscan evenings on your lawn, with Browning and the immortal style of Landor. Till it became cold I followed my baths at Frascati's, and then made a little tour in Normandy and Brittany with an old acquaintance of William's, Hamilton Aïdé. He thinks William a very accomplished person. So do I.

"You have seen in the papers that a subscription has been started for a statue in bronze of Horace Mann, to be placed in the State House yard. I have written to insist that William must do it; first because he is the first American sculptor, secondly because he would especially appreciate the character and life of Mann. Tell him to write me at once his ideas on this matter —what of portraits or photographs he would need, and how he feels about undertaking it.

"I sleep to-night at Amiens and to-morrow touch English earth. I have already accepted country invitations more than enough to fill all the time until sea-sickness begins.

"[Theodore] Parker will winter in Rome. I fear the excitement and strain of art, antiquity and history there will not leave him his needed repose. Pray watch him and send him home

strong and well, to preach great sermons and hold aloft the scales of justice. Hillard I hear of in Paris, but see him not. He must be ashamed of himself."

We feel by his first words from Washington (January 27th, 1860) that in his absence the plot has indeed thickened. "What a difference between this place and Rome! I feel it keenly. And yet there is a delight here which you have not. It is the standing up for truth and liberty. The slave-masters seem to me more than ever *barbarians*—in manner, conversation, speeches, conduct, principles, life. All things indicate a crisis. Society is dislocated. The diplomats cannot give a dinner without studying their lists as a protocol. There is little or no intercourse between sides." And he breaks out again, on March 23rd, in a note from the Senate Chamber. "A walk in the streets of Rome, a stroll on the Pincian, a visit to the Vatican, a sight of St Peter's—oh, for an hour, one brief hour, of any of these! And oh, better still, for a talk with *you!* I have so much to say on art—and on our politics here, which have none of the refinement of art. Never was such a horror put into bronze as this recent statue by Clark Mills, unless you except his other horror. Motley

is in the Institute (of France). *A la bonne heure!*" And as of the same year I give the following, dated Boston, August 10th, and forming the first half of a letter of which the second is occupied with requests and orders for reproductions of busts in the Vatican, columns in the Forum and other Roman relics.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"Boston, *Aug.* 10*th*, 1860.

. . . "Yesterday I was at Mount Auburn especially to see the statues in the Chapel. I had not been there for years. I was pleased with them all; but yours seemed to me more beautiful than ever both as portrait and as art. I doubt if there be a finer portrait-statue in existence. . . . Your bust of Theodore Parker is spoken of with admiration. It ought to be ordered in marble for the Public Library. I shall push this idea. But what a loss was there! Daily I feel the immense void which his death has made, and I know not where to look for any one to fill it. I know well how earnestly he would have sustained me in my late efforts. . . . I am charmed with the news from Italy. The sooner the old is rung out and the new rung in the better. I hope to hear very soon that Bomba has fled and Pius after

him. Meanwhile I imagine you at Siena. I wish that I were there. I should like to feast my eyes on an Italian landscape, with glimpses at Italian art, and to feel that I was in Italy. But life is real, life is earnest—does not Longfellow say so?—and I have hard work here which I mean to do."

The Brownings spent again in Rome the winter of 1859-60, and for the summer returned to Siena, to which the following, from Florence, was prefatory. The friends were to be together again for the last bright season, as it was to prove, of Mrs Browning's life. The journey had been pursued, after the stages enumerated, to Florence, and the return to Siena and the Villa Alberti was made in July. There attaches to the letter something of the charm of a document on the old romantic method of progression at a date when such documents were becoming rare. This is one of the last of them.

Robert Browning to Mr and Mrs Story.

"SIENA, *June 8th*, 1860.

"I said I would tell you how we found things and fared on the Orvieto road. We arrived at four yesterday afternoon and preferred resting

here for four-and-twenty hours to going forward at once. We travelled 48 or 50 miles delightfully the first day and reached Viterbo early. Next morning we began the new part of the journey—continued 30 miles at a stretch and got to Orvieto through a pleasant placid country (much work of Luca Signorelli at the cathedral). On Wednesday we advanced to Ficulli; but for Ba's fatigue it would have been better to push on to Città della Pieve, where a fresco of Perugino's is worth the trouble of a longer journey and the comfort of the inn would have been much greater. But it was our own choice to divide the way so. We reached Chiusi early, having travelled all day through exquisite scenery. We felt the heat — not intolerably, however, nor before this third day, and there was never any dust to mention. We left Chiusi at nine, or later, yesterday (I got up early every morning and saw sights for an hour or two), and reached Sinalunga by one o'clock. Had there been an endurable inn Ba might have rested sufficiently to proceed to Florence; but she was forced to choose between the kitchens and the carriage, and preferred the latter — so here we stopped, as I began by saying. We were perfectly served throughout, the *vetturino* caring for all things, and his

charge for the three days and a half amounts to 19 scudi, 2 pauls. I paid the service myself; only this was not much. The end is, we have had a delightful journey which Ba has borne very well on the whole, though the whole business is far more fatiguing than by the short stages on the Perugia road. . . ."

Before the return to Siena, meanwhile, Browning had again written.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story.

"FLORENCE, *June 29th*, 1860.

. . . "I was going to answer you leisurely, when there is a sudden occasion of writing to Nencini, for Landor determines at last to accompany us, and I want the old quarters for him, where you helped to make him so comfortable last year. So I just write a word, without prejudice to the other few words I mean to write before we set out, to say that, for ourselves, the best news is that we start for Marciano, and you all, to-morrow week,—as I have just apprised Alberti. Won't you like to see another month or two of dear old Landor and Can'-Giallo (he has just come to me for picture-money—such pictures!). . . . Would you have the goodness, whenever you engage your piano,

to secure for me the same that I had last year, at the same terms? And beg that it may be transferred to the villa on the 7th, so that we may find it on arriving."

He brought his dying wife in the autumn back to Rome—they were settled in September at 126 Via Felice; and Mrs Browning mentions in a letter of the autumn that her husband "has taken to modelling under Mr Story (at his studio) and is making extraordinary progress." These, it is needless to say, were months of deep anxiety and suspense for lovers of Italy; public events had hurried over the stage like the contending armies of Elizabethan plays; the "cause" and its issue hung, as never before, in the balance: with the sense, and the alternations, of all of which Mrs Browning's correspondence flushes and turns pale. Her letters, of this and the previous time, while the pulses of her companion's much more clearly throb, reflect her passion, her feverish obsession, with extraordinary vivacity and eloquence; but it is impossible not to feel, as we read, that to "care," in the common phrase, as she is caring is to entertain one's convictions as a malady and a doom. Her state of mind on the public question, as her letters present it almost from the first of her residence in Italy,

is an interesting, an almost unique *case*, which forces upon us more than one question; so that we wonder why so much disinterested passion, so inflamed a desire that the right (and for a people not her own, a people only befriended and admired) should not leave us in a less disturbed degree the benefit of all the moral beauty. We wonder at the anomaly, wonder why we are even perhaps slightly irritated, and end by asking ourselves if it be not because her admirable mind, otherwise splendidly exhibited, has inclined us to look in her for that saving and sacred sense of proportion, of the free and blessed *general*, that great poets, that genius and the high range of genius, give us the impression of even in emotion and passion, even in pleading a cause and calling on the gods. Mrs Browning's sense of the general had all run, where the loosening of the Italian knot, the character of Napoleon III., the magnanimity of France and the abjection of England were involved, to the strained and the strenuous—a possession, by the subject, riding her to death, that almost prompts us at times to ask wherein it so greatly concerned her. It concerned her of course as it concerned all near witnesses and lovers of justice, but the effect of her insistent voice and fixed eye is to make us somehow feel

that justice is, after all, of human things, has something of the convenient looseness of humanity about it—so that we are uneasy, in short, till we have recognised the ground of our critical reaction. It would seem to be this ground, exactly, that makes the case an example. Monstrous as the observation may sound in its crudity, we absolutely feel the beautiful mind and the high gift discredited by their engrossment. We say, roughly, that this is what becomes of distinguished spirits when they fail to keep above. The cause of Italy was, obviously, for Mrs Browning, as high aloft as any object of interest could be; but that was only because she had let down, as it were, her inspiration and her poetic pitch. They suffered for it sadly—the permission of which, conscious or unconscious, is on the part of the poet, on the part of the beautiful mind, ever to be judged (by any critic with any sense of the real) as the unpardonable sin. That is our complaint: the clear stream runs thick; the real superiority pays; we are less edified than we ought to be. Which is perhaps, after all, not a very graceful point to make (though it must stand), while I avail myself of the last fine tracings of her pen that I encounter. One is but a scrap of a note to Mrs Story, which sounds for the first time—

that is my reason—a name I must not let slip. "Dearest Emelyn: I wrote to Miss Blagden to-day about the Pantaleoni apartment. Thank you twenty times. Wish for me, *will* for me, mesmerise for me, that I may indeed go to bed early to-night. For Mr W. is here talking down art in Italy!" This other fragment, from Florence, undated, and as a postscript to a note of her husband's, belongs to some moment of the previous couple of years.

. . . "Here are fanatics of all colours, nowadays. News from Naples are threatening in this 'Monitore' just opened. Whoever goes mad among the enemies of Italy she gets the advantage of it. May they go mad therefore. As soon as the rain ceases and I can get out I will go and see your charming little Duchess (di Carigliano). I like her and honour her house —here in Florence I mean. Robert hasn't told you that whatever Can'-Giallo may be doing poetically his master is active. Robert *might* tell you that a poem on the goddess Diana was produced the other day, for instance, which had the peculiarity of being so exceedingly indecent (for Diana or any other goddess or woman) that it might be objected to by less prudish critics than Monckton Milnes."

There were to be, at any rate, no more missives in the delicate but so definite little characters. This of Browning's, in Rome, must have been of May, or thereabouts, 1861, and have preceded but by a few days their last return to Florence. The plans for the summer were to have no sequel.

"I meant to go down to you to-day and thank you—but Ba, who caught cold in some strange way two days ago, suddenly became much worse, and last night was alarmingly attacked by the old obstruction at the chest. I had to fetch a doctor in the night who stayed with us till morning; it really seemed as if she would be strangled on the spot, and that for six hours together. At five o'clock she began to get through it, and since then has been much better. I shall be forced to leave this burning place as soon as she is able—*where* do you go? I will write to-morrow and tell you how she is. In your letter you incline to Viareggio, do you? Or the old Siena? Or the Baths? Or any place in the mountains, such as Corvigliaio, 30 miles hence in the Bologna mountains, said to be cold as Switzerland, with one inn and no resources beyond its romantic scenery. Let us be together if we can. Such a fright this at-

tack has been. Suppose we had been pleasantly travelling!"

There was to be quite another sequel to the hopes so expressed for the coming weeks, but that these hopes persisted until shortly before the catastrophe I gather from another letter, from Florence, undated, but which can scarcely belong to another moment, and which refers again to pleasant possibilities. The allusion to the negotiation attempted for the Brownings in Rome has a reference to the small *rococo* apartment in the Barberini which I have already mentioned, and which was in the opposite wing of the palace from that of the Storys. The hope of acquiring it, as "just the place," had been the more fondly entertained as the Florentine winter had, at the last, definitely become impossible to Mrs Browning. It would indeed have been just the place, with that luxuriously mild inclination of its staircase designed as if for the ascent of an invalid. But the question, with so many other questions, dropped.

Robert Browning to Mr and Mrs Story.

"Florence [1861].

. . . "There's no doubt you can have Villa Orr how and when you please. Nencini said the owners wanted money, would never have

refused an offer; in short, I took it for granted that any conditions so reasonable would be accepted unless I gave too early notice of the possibility of your return. Should you incline to the Baths of Lucca? I hear of the propitious emptiness of that place also, how any terms will be caught at. What do you think of Viareggio, which seems rather attractive to folks this season, and is praised for its sea and six miles of sand?

"How kindness's self you have been in all that troublesome negotiation for the apartment! It will all come to nothing, we begin to fear, as the days go by and bring no tidings. As the chair could be appended without disfigurement to the house, one sees no other reason against it than that fears and scruples shake the Prince and we shall probably drop off in the shake—a great pity though!—Yes, very good news, good symptoms on every side, for Italy. The main of it is affected, let us hope—*tutto è salvo*, and the less of delay in these plaguy *dettagli* the better. How hot, how unpleasant to be so far away from you, how pleasant to hope soon to see the good summer-time again as of old in your company! We all want the same things exactly—can it not be? Ba is stronger and better, but has not

left the house. Landor has cut off his beard—treasure your photographs! We hear less of American news than when we were at Rome, and abundantly despise our own mean newspaper articles."

The sequel that did occur in June forms part of a long and very interesting letter of Story's—so full that I give it without curtailment. Like Browning, he, that year, with his wife and children, left Italy.

W. W. Story to Charles Eliot Norton.

"DIABLERETS, *Aug.* 15*th*, 1861.

. . . "We are immediately under the bare and broken heights of the great Diablerets, in whose rocky bosom, almost, as it seems, within reach of our hands, though in fact there are miles of air between us, lies the flashing glacier with its soiled edges. This valley is a long level studded with black pines and with the lighter green of maples, hazels and willows, and through it are all sorts of little grassy paths leading you into depths of woods or up mountain heights or through groups of cedar-brown *châlets*. As I look out from my window I see the slopes of the mountains towards Sepey, whose vast meadows of bright glad green are sprinkled all

over with *châlets* and darkened here and there with parliaments of pines—or rather platoons of pines, which seem to be marching like black rangers, or Lützow's wild hunters, down into the valley. The great torrent called the Grandes Eaux, which intersects the valley, rushes to empty itself in the great lake below with a joyous, tumultuous sound, as if glad to be free from the glacial torpor above. Plant me here then and imagine me looking one way down the laughing valley, brilliant in the sunshine, and the other way up the grey barren cliffs of the Diablerets, covered with eternal snow and grim as despair. . . . We were skilful enough to land here the other day, after excellent fishing, our friend Mr Gaskell, whom we had never before seen. He spent a week with us, and we enjoyed his society extremely. What a sweet, broad character he has! I was really glad to see him in the flesh, for he had been but a name before. We talked of you and of all our friends of the Italian campaign, and it was pleasant to find how truly he shared our friendships. Yesterday morning we walked down the valley with him and said good-bye with real regret.

"But to turn to sadder things. You have before this heard of course of the death of Mrs Browning, though the news had not reached you

when you wrote. This was sudden and unexpected at the last, for though she had always been so frail that one only wondered what kept soul and body together at all, we had become so accustomed to thinking of her as different from all others in the matter of health that we began to think that she might even outlast us. Fifteen years ago her physicians told her that life was impossible, yet she had lived and borne a child and written immortal verses and shown an amazing energy of spirit and intellect. But last winter I had many fears that she was failing. The death of her father had struck her a hard blow; then her sister's death struck her again, as it were, when she was down, and I feared that her vital energy, great as it was, might not resist. Yet she revived and, as spring came on, went out to drive, and, though weak, began to gather herself together again, even at one time projecting a journey to Paris. This however was impossible. Yet she went to Florence by *vettura* and did not suffer more than usual, and we were all hesitating, at Leghorn, whether we should not abandon our scheme of Switzerland for another summer together in Siena when the fatal news of her death reached us. Browning was to have come down to spend Sunday with us, but on Saturday night she was attacked

with difficulty of breathing, and at dead of night he was forced to run for a physician, Dr Wilson, who remained with her all night and took a very gloomy view. The morning brought relief, and, though weaker, she declared she was otherwise as well as ever. They talked over their plans for the future, decided to go to Siena for the summer with us, agreed to give up Casa Guidi and take a villa in Florence to return to in the spring and autumn. Being in treaty for an apartment in Palazzo Barberini at Rome for six years, they discussed the question of how they should furnish it. During the subsequent days she constantly came into the salon and lay on the sofa there all day—until Friday, when Lytton stayed all the morning there talking with B., so that she did not come out. On Friday evening they had again a long talk about their future plans, and she went to bed as well as she had been in general respects, though there were some few symptoms which troubled B., such as raising now and then her hands and holding them long before her, and also a slight wandering of the mind at intervals and as she was just about to doze. But this wandering he attributed to the morphine, which by order of Dr W. she was obliged to take in larger quantities than those she was accustomed to. At about three o'clock

he was startled by her breathing and woke her, but she said she was better, and reasoned so quietly and justly about her state that his fears were again subdued. She talked with him and jested and gave expression to her love for him in the tenderest words; then, feeling sleepy, and he supporting her in his arms, she fell into a doze. In a few minutes, suddenly, her head dropped forward. He thought she had fainted, but she had gone for ever. She had passed as if she had fallen asleep, without pain, without thought of death. After death she looked, as Browning told me, like a young girl; all the outlines rounded and filled up, all traces of disease effaced, and a smile on her face so living that they could not for hours persuade themselves she was really dead.

"We went immediately to Florence, and it was a sad house enough. There stood the table with her letters and books as usual, and her little chair beside it, and in her portfolio a half-finished letter to Mme. Mario, full of noble words about Italy. Yes, it was for Italy that her last words were written; for her dear Italy were her last aspirations. The death of Cavour had greatly affected her. She had wept many tears for him, and been a real mourner. This agitation undoubtedly weakened her and per-

haps was the last feather that broke her down. 'The cycle is complete,' as Browning said, looking round the room; 'here we came fifteen years ago; here Pen was born; here Ba wrote her poems for Italy. She used to walk up and down this verandah in the summer evenings, when, revived by the southern air, she first again began to enjoy her out-doors life. Every day she used to walk with me or drive with me, and once even walked to Bellosguardo and back; that was when she was strongest. Little by little, as I now see, that distance was lessened, the active out-doors life restricted, until walking had finally ceased. We saw from these windows the return of the Austrians; they wheeled round this corner and came down this street with all their cannon, just as she describes it in "Casa Guidi." Last week when we came to Florence I said: "We used, you know, to walk on this verandah so often—come and walk up and down once. Just once," I urged, and she came to the window and took two steps on it. But it fatigued her too much, and she went back and lay down on the sofa—that was our last walk. Only the night she went away for ever she said she thought we must give up Casa Guidi; it was too inconvenient and in case of illness too small. We had decided to

go away and take a villa outside the gates. For years she would not give up this house, but at last and, as it were, suddenly, she said she saw it *was* too small for us and too inconvenient. And so it was; so the cycle was completed for us here, and where the beginning was is the end. Looking back at these past years I see that we have been all the time walking over a torrent on a straw. Life must now be begun anew—all the old cast off and the new one put on. I shall go away, break up everything, go to England and live and work and write.'

. . . "The funeral was not impressive, as it ought to have been. She was buried in the Protestant cemetery where Theodore Parker lies; many of her friends were there, but fewer persons than I expected and hoped to see. The services were blundered through by a fat English parson in a brutally careless way, and she was consigned by him to the earth as if her clay were no better than any other clay. I did what I could, but I had arrived too late to assume the arrangements. . . . So I carried two wreaths—it was all I could do—one of those exquisite white Florence roses, and the other of laurel, and these I laid on her coffin. She

is a great loss to literature, to Italy and to the world—the greatest poet among women. What energy and fire there was in that little frame; what burning words were winged by her pen; with what glorious courage she attacked error, however strongly entrenched in custom; how bravely she stood by her principles! Never did I see any one whose brow the world hurried and crowded so to crown, who had so little vanity and so much pure humility. Praise gratified her when just—blame when unjust scarcely annoyed her. She could afford to let her work plead for itself. Ready to accept criticism, she never feared it, but defended herself with spirit when unjustly attacked. For public opinion she cared not a straw, and could not bear to be looked on as a lion. Her faiths were rooted in the centre of her being.

"Browning is now with his sister in Paris. The house at Florence is broken up, and I have lost my best friend and daily companion in Italy. You cannot imagine how I shall miss him. For three years now we have been always together; never a day has passed (with the exception of two months' separation in the spring and autumn when he went to Florence) that we have not met; all the long summer evenings

of these last summers at Siena he was with us, and we sat on our terrace night after night till midnight talking together, or we played and sang together above stairs. All the last winters he worked with me daily for three hours in my studio, and we met either at my house or at his or at that of some friend nearly every evening. There is no one to supply his place. Returning to Rome, I have not one single intimate; acquaintances by hundreds, but no friends, no one with whom I can sympathise on all points as with him, no one with whom I can walk any of the higher ranges of art and philosophy. This for me is a terrible want. I must have some one to sail with me over deeps that So-and-so and So-and-so ignore. But at Rome who is there? Only such rubbish as M., R., and Co. among the artists, fellows whose brains are an inch deep and who are animated by all sorts of meannesses. . . . Englishmen who think are very rare; they are generally ganglions of prejudices, which they call opinions, and what ideas they have are generally narrow and bigoted or developments only in a single direction. Their education is never general, but special, and outside their speciality they are terribly barren. There was

for instance Newton, the British consul, with whom I was in very close relation on questions of art, who thought, felt and dreamed with me most harmoniously, and with whom I had real sympathy in these matters. But he never had heard John Webster's name, asked me who Thomas Middleton was, knew nothing, cared nothing for poetry, music, painting, and was most curiously developed in literature: an admirable Greek scholar, who quoted and knew, who admired Æschylus and Plato and yet knew nothing of English poetry beyond Shakespeare, or in modern philosophy beyond Locke. He never projected himself into philosophy—he needed to be pushed along. You and I know hundreds of such men. They are planted on their ground and can't speculate; they say 'Ouh! ouh!' to you when you hazard a theory or state a principle. The English mind is not a philosophic one; they are not of the air, but of the earth; in the good sense of the term, but still of the earth. Browning is by nature not an Englishman.

. . . "The last thing I did before leaving Rome was to make a bust of him which his wife was good enough to call 'perfect.' It was made for her as a present, but, alas! you see

the end of that. Since you were with us I have made several statues—one of Judith at the moment she makes her prayer before killing Holofernes. The right hand is thrown up to heaven, the left holds, a little behind her, her sword. In this I endeavoured to express passionate religious enthusiasm and the summoning of all one's energy to do a great patriotic act, thus putting out of view the crime. It is not to kill Holofernes her betrayer, but Holofernes the tyrant, the oppressor of her country, that she asks the help of God in a great duty and a great sacrifice. All other representations make Judith a criminal, an assassin, and it is only *before* the act that she is poetically and artistically grand. The deed done she is a woman who has killed a man—and with Holofernes' head repulsive. The painters represent her thus, for sake of colour and contrast, but this conception of her is low. The only other time is when she holds the head up to the people, a grand subject for a grand painting. Next I made for contrast of sentiment a boy Bacchus on a panther, which is purely lyrical in treatment. Then this last winter I finished what I consider as my best work—it is so considered by all, I believe—the Libyan Sibyl. I have

taken the pure Coptic head and figure, the great massive sphinx-face, full-lipped, long-eyed, low-browed and lowering, and the largely-developed limbs of the African. She sits on a rock, her legs crossed, leaning forward, her elbow on her knee and her chin pressed down upon her hand. The upper part of the figure is nude, and a rich simple mantle clothes her legs. This gave me a grand opportunity for the contrast of the masses of the nude with drapery, and I studied the nude with great care. It is a very massive figure, big-shouldered, large-bosomed, with nothing of the Venus in it, but, as far as I could make it, luxuriant and heroic. She is looking out of her black eyes into futurity and sees the terrible fate of her race. This is the theme of the figure—Slavery on the horizon, and I made her head as melancholy and severe as possible, not at all shirking the real African type. On the contrary, it is thoroughly African—Libyan Africa of course, not Congo. This I am now putting into marble, and if I can afford it shall send to the new Exhibition in London. . . . If it is returned on my hands I shall abandon sculpture, or at all events shut up my studio."

I give without interruption, as adding to the

record, two more letters to the same correspondent.

W. W. Story to Charles Eliot Norton.

"Rome, *May 3rd*, 1862.

. . . "My winter is over, Rome has broken up, and we are off to England in a couple of weeks. I have been hard at work and have just finished a statue of Sappho seated—a lovelorn lady dreaming of *him*, whoever he was, Phaon, Anacreon, or any other *on;* very tender, very sweet, very sentimental. In this statue I have gone into Greekland, as in the Sibyl I went into Africa, and in the Cleopatra into Egypt. I fancy just at this moment of time that you would think it my best work—I have put all the Love into it I could. The Sibyl and Cleopatra are gone to the Exhibition [London 1862], and I must go and look after them. But I have little will to go to England, and were it not for these statues nothing should persuade me to the journey. Once there, it is just within the bounds of possibility (and nothing more) that I may go over to America for a few weeks and set my house in order, following the example in that respect of good king Hezekiah. But this too will go terribly against my grain, and nothing but necessity will drive me across the ocean.—I

hope you received a little pamphlet of mine on the American question. We are in a great state of excitement here as the telegrams arrive containing news of battles. All seems to be going on well, but I am sorry not to see more strong indications of Union sentiment in the South. The course pursued toward McClellan by a portion of the press and by a large party is disgraceful. We are an impatient and ungrateful people. But I feel confident that McClellan will overcome at last all his enemies. . . ."

The house from which the following is dated, at Walton-on-Thames, long occupied by Mr and Mrs Russell Sturgis, was to be in a manner, for years, Story's headquarters during his visits to England. His various sojourns there, with the innumerable incidents of an irresistible hospitality, would be almost matter for a chapter, one of the pleasantest, by itself.

W. W. Story to Charles Eliot Norton.

"MOUNT FELIX, *Nov.* 10*th*, 1862.

"Herewith I enclose to you, or rather Frederic Locker will enclose to you, a copy of a little volume of his poems to which I beg to call your attention. They are of a light humoristic character. . . . Many thanks for your kind (as

usual) letter, which I should have answered at once but that my time has been so completely occupied with visiting and correcting for the press my 'Roba di Roma,' which is finally to appear. As in my art so in my literary efforts, I get the best appreciation in England. The publishers at home rejected my book. . . . It is of no use in America for me to hope for anything. I do not expect to find a public there until I have obtained it elsewhere. They will resist to the last considering me as anything but a poetaster, dilettante and amateur.

"My visit to England has been delightful; everywhere and from everybody I have received the warmest kindness and hospitality—such as I never can forget. People have vied with each other in generous expressions and acts, and I have been greeted with a praise which, grateful as it is, I cannot feel to be quite deserved. However, some day I hope to deserve it. . . . I hope I have established myself on a new footing as an artist. I am going back to Rome full of good intentions and strong for work."

VIII.

THE CLEOPATRA AND THE LIBYAN SIBYL.

THE year 1862 was a date, *the* date, in Story's life; bringing with it the influence, the sense of possibilities of success, the prospect of a full and free development, under which he settled—practically for the rest of his days—and which was to encounter in the time to come no serious check. The time immediately to come was to have its dark days—which were the dark days of the American Civil War, that weary middle period of anxiety almost unrelieved, especially for spectators at a distance whose sympathies were with the North and to whom it sometimes seemed that the issue scarce hung in the balance. Story was in England each of these years and inevitably in contact with much feeling and expression, in this connection, that was not of a nature to soothe patriotic soreness. His own sentiments and convictions relieved themselves by a demonstration on which he

was distinctly to be congratulated and of which we shall presently encounter evidence. But meanwhile his artistic and his personal success were of the greatest, and, as the shadow of the War slowly cleared, life, activity and ambition opened out for him in a hundred interesting ways. The effect produced by his work at the Exhibition of 1862 was immediate and general, and would carry us back, should we follow the clue, to a near and suggestive view of the taste, the æsthetic sensibility of the time. The clue would take us, however, too far; we can only feel, as we pass, a certain envy of a critical attitude easier, simpler and less "evolved" than our own. "Critical" attitude is doubtless even too much to say; the sense to which, for the most part, the work of art or of imagination, the picture, the statue, the novel, the play, appealed was not, in any strictness, the æsthetic sense in general or the plastic in particular, but the sense of the romantic, the anecdotic, the supposedly historic, the explicitly pathetic. It was still the age in which an image had, before anything else, to tell a story, and that had much to do with the immense welcome offered to the Sibyl and the Cleopatra of the new American sculptor. In living over these enjoyments, these enthusiasms and responses,

the pleasantness, the felicity, the intellectual comfort of it all are, I confess, what most strikes me, and to the point really of wishing we might again have our pleasures, in this order, on terms on the whole as easy. Story, as we have noted, was frankly and forcibly romantic, and with a highly cultivated quality in his romance; so that he penetrated the imagination of his public as nobody else just then could have done. He told his tale with admirable emphasis and straightness, with a strong sense both of character and of drama, so that he created a kind of interest for the statue which had been, without competition, up to that time, reserved for the picture. He gave the marble something of the colour of the canvas; he in any case offered the observer a spectacle and, as nearly as possible, a scene. It was a question if not always absolutely of an action perpetrated, at least of one meditated, prepared, remembered or prompted, and, with that, of a state of feeling, a state of expression, to which association could lend a glamour. He chose his subjects, for the most part, among figures already consecrated to the imagination — by history, poetry, legend—and so offered them with all their signs and tokens, their features and enhancements. He created thus, ingenious and

abundant as he was—created it, that is, above all for the English taste—a tradition of sculpture quite distinct from that tradition which previous generations, haunters of dim Academic shades, gropers in queer crepuscular cellars, were excusable for never having, at any moment, markedly "warmed to," for having in fact quite positively looked at askance, shyly, coldly, unpersuadedly. Strange, starved creations glimmer before us in that early Victorian limbo, shining with a light too pale for identifications, yet wearing the fetters of the academic without suggesting its possibilities of "style"; meagre maidens and matrons, earnest, respectable males, nymphs and heroes equally without temperament or attitude, pomp or circumstance, and all, somehow, blank, bereaved, disconsolate, as if deprived of their proper lachrymal urns or weeping willows. If the section of sculpture in the old exhibitions was mainly a desert, there were thus, with all respect to occasional exceptions, memories and warnings that accounted for the mistrust.

Little wonder accordingly that Story's new note so promptly "took"—the new note that was distinctly not English, and yet was as little French (as the French note was remembered or conceived); and, still again, was not at all

American on the lines of Mr Powers's Greek Slave, the only piece of American sculpture then known in England. He "drew," almost, like a successful play; he peopled, at a stroke, a quarter of the desert; he showed, in a word, that marble could be made interesting even to the many. On the same lines, accordingly, from that time on, he continued to make it so; the rest of his work is in germ in the two statues of 1862. The admirable Libyan Sibyl indeed he, on the whole, I think, never surpassed—never perhaps even quite equalled, for his subject here was a treasure to him and his vision of it wholly felicitous. If it be sometimes given to parents to have a child whom they recognise as born happy and who is to remain for them under the protection of that star, so artists—and perhaps, fortunately, oftener—produce works that have come into the world exactly as they should, that bear the stamp of it all over, and that have been provided for, solidly, from their birth. By which I mean that the individual producer has been blest when he has known this complacency once or twice. We may really say of Story that he knew it as repeatedly as he might; since the Cleopatra, exhibited for the first time on the same occasion as the Sibyl, ranks almost equally as one of the happy children,

creatures of inspiration and prosperity. Well may these figures, with their calm intensity, have been found expressive and living, and yet, by the happiest art, tranquil in their beauty in spite of the quantity of story they were addressed to telling. The Cleopatra in particular is admirable for this, for the way in which line and form, a composition interesting in itself, control and condense the historic, the romantic hints. At the same time, no doubt, not less than its companion, this figure would have sown the seeds of a critical objection that was to express itself, freely enough, later on — the restrictive view of the artist's fondness for the draped body and his too liberal use of drapery. The Cleopatra is practically a dressed heroine; the Sibyl is covered, voluminously enough, from the middle downward; and so, in many a case, their successors were to be, in a manner, costumed. The fact, however, suggests more than one reflection—the first of which is of the sort that, bearing on the question of the current taste, of what, in relation to the public, was possible and not possible, has always an interest. Story's work as a sculptor speaks, incontestably, of the public it had to confront and involves a view of that public. There are things in the arts, of a truth, that have more eloquence and value for us by

that reference than they offer in any other way; so that positively, at moments, we find ourselves turn insistently from the work itself to the evoked spirit of its place and hour, which become, in its light, almost as concrete as itself. Such, so many and so perverse, are the solicitations to which the critical sense is open.

It might easily here, for instance, be drawn into wonderments that would carry it far; wonderments, say, as to what the felt *demand* for drapery, in the mid-Victorian time, may really have been, and then, conformably, as to what coherent terms the demand would have been expressed in. There was apparently no case against sculpture — as, for that matter, there is no case to-day against painting; yet there presumably both was and is a presentable case (though never presented) against the nude, to which these arts are of necessity beholden for so much of their life. Story, visibly, was preoccupied with this supposed interdict—which, as reflected, for better or for worse, in his labours, might thus, as I say, had we space, invite consideration. How far was he right, how far was he wrong? how much would the world about him have "stood," had he insisted, or what scarce imaginable revelations of shockability might we, on the other hand, have been treated

to? Story kept, for all sorts of excellent reasons, one of which I will presently mention, on the "safe side"; but it is possibly not open to question that the fond critic (critic, I mean, of the peculiarities of publics,) may have been deprived by this circumstance of precious lights on significant abysses. There might, for all we know, have been pleas, arguments, documents; and the documents might have been curious; by which I mean that the case against the nude might have been, for once in a way, presented—with consequences calculable, or perhaps rather incalculable, for the earnest observer, to say nothing of the genial satirist. Story, obviously, at all events, loved the nude, as the artist, in any field, essentially and logically must; and he paid it, in marble, in verse, in prose, such frank tribute, on occasion, as he might; and I hasten to add that if his relation to it is visibly enough governed by influences, mistaken or other, one at least of these latter operated not only quite lawfully, but, from his point of view, quite happily. Drapery, that is, folds and dispositions of stuff and applications, intimations of ornament, became a positive and necessary part of his scheme from the moment that scheme was romantic; nothing being more curious than the truth that though the nude may have a dozen other convincing notes

it is eminently destitute of *that* one—or possesses it only when conscious, contrasted or opposed. To borrow from the list of Story's productions alone, we no more see, for romantic illustration and conviction, a naked Saul, a stripped Sardanapalus, a Medea without her robe or an Alcestis without her veil, than we see a dressed Agamemnon, an accoutred Antinous, an Apollo protected from the weather or a Venus rising from the sea in a bathing-suit. The "story" of the most beautiful of legends is (at least pictorially speaking) not in Andromeda, isolated and divinely bare, but in the mailed and caparisoned Perseus, his glorious gear, his winged horse and helmet and lance.

It was in elements of this order that, even with his interest in the endless human body, Story found a constant charm, recognising how much, in almost any case, they might do for his conception. His imagination, of necessity, went in preference to the figure for which accessories were of the essence; which is doubtless a proof, one must hasten to recognise, that he was not with the last intensity a sculptor. Had he been this he would not, in all probability, have been also with such intensity (so far as impulse and eagerness were concerned) so many other things; a man of ideas—of *other* ideas, of

other curiosities. These were so numerous with him that they were active diversions, driving him into almost every sort of literary experiment and speculation. It was not that he failed to grasp the plastic, but much rather that he saw it everywhere, and that, wherever seen, it tempted and challenged him. It tempted him perpetually in the form of verse, and he is singular in having apparently, in respect to some alternatives, never really made up his mind. He was as addicted to poetry as if he had never dreamed of a statue, and as addicted to statues as if he were unable to turn a verse. Add to this that he constantly overflowed, by spoken and by written talk, into an extremely various criticism, and we see that, if the approach to final form be through concentration, he was not concentrated. If sculpture be a thing of supreme intimacy he was not supremely intimate. He had, in a word, too many friends for any one of them ever to have succeeded in establishing absolute rights. It was, æsthetically speaking, a wonderful all-round sociability. All of which considerations, however, in this connection, solicit me less, I feel, than the mere side-issue—comparatively—of the echo started for us, a while back, in Mrs Gaskell's letter. She was full of her Hawthorne, she had been

reading "Transformation," and she sets us, so far as our connection is concerned, reading it again for ourselves. Then it is that a much pleasanter thing occurs than even being sure we are right in estimate and characterisation—then it is that we are contented and charmed to be, in the matter, whatever the good Hawthorne was in the golden air of his Romanised vision; then it is, in fine, that we assist, ever so consentingly, at the odd, delightful business of the practical *consecration* of a work of art, and are moved, over and above, to brood genially on the shy phenomenon. That is perhaps easier than to express it, to say exactly how it is that in such a case we are affected by the poetry of association, the beneficence of perspective, the antiquity, as we may almost say, of tone. It is all a matter of the writer's singular sweetness, which embalms and enshrines, for the responsive mind, the figure round which it plays. The mysterious Miriam, in the novel, it will be remembered, comes, in her sad unrest, to the studio of Kenyon, the young American sculptor, and makes acquaintance there with the image of a grand seated woman, a personage royal and wonderful, who is none other than a fine prose transcript of Story's Cleopatra. Immensely impressed, she questions her host as to the source

of his vision, and his admirable answer may doubtless stand for the artist's only possible account of the origin of any work. "I kindled a great fire in my mind and threw in the material —as Aaron threw the gold of the Israelites into the furnace—and in the midmost heat uprose Cleopatra as you see her." She saw her, Miriam, as romantically as the artist himself could have wished, weaving fine fancies about her in the gentle Hawthornesque way; as a result of which, and of the talk, of the scene, of the whole charming context and confusion, the beautiful light mantle of the book, all loose and soft and ample, is thrown over the statue. It is not exactly, of course, as if the protection had, in advance, been needed, but when once the phenomenon, as I have called it, occurs—the phenomenon of a recognition, an assimilation, which is not as that of criticism, but something tenderer and more fraternal, and which fairly gains by being "old-fashioned"—we take it in for our edification. Such is the quality, such the diffusion, such the magic of the sweetness that we impute; an element that so constantly clears and disinfects Hawthorne's so-called gloom, making it light, pictorial, digestible, and in which the whole thing floats as through a pleasant September haze. "Transformation," in short, with

its laxities of insistence, its timidities of indication, its felicities of suggestion, its sincerities of simplicity and, most of all, its total vague intensity, so curiously composed of all these, is, more than anything, a loveable production—which, in its wandering amiability, holds up for a moment a mirror to another work, a little magic mirror from which the reflection, once caught, never fades.

Story's liveliest sympathy meanwhile, it need scarce be said, had followed Browning to England, and he and his wife were constantly present in spirit at that work of building up a new life from the very foundation to which their friend was now committed. Browning's existence had sharply broken and had, in conditions completely changed, to be, as it were, repaired and made practicable. There would be perhaps no more interesting chapter in his biography than that of his return from his long Italian absence, stricken and lonely (save for the place henceforth taken in his thoughts by his young son), to address himself to a future indefinite and obscure. It was almost a fresh beginning; he had quitted London, fourteen years before, sufficiently young and sufficiently unknown to have left his possibilities in general, his maturer contacts and relations, still to establish, themselves, his im-

pressions, mainly, still to condense. His early letters to his Roman correspondents reflect, vividly enough, this phase; they are in themselves very nearly the picture of a situation and the history of a period. The writer's London period was in fact to be rich and ample, was to be attended with felicities and prosperities, of every sort, that cast the comparatively idyllic Italian time into the background and seemed, superficially, to build it out. But thus, really, was generated, in the personal, social, intellectual way, the wonderful Browning we so largely were afterwards to know—the accomplished, saturated, sane, sound man of the London world and the world of "culture," of whom it is impossible not to believe that he had arrived somehow, for his own deep purposes, at the enjoyment of a double identity. It was not easy to meet him and know him without some resort to the supposition that he had literally mastered the secret of dividing the personal consciousness into a pair of independent compartments. The man of the world—the man who was good enough for the world, such as it was—walked abroad, showed himself, talked, right resonantly, abounded, multiplied his contacts and did his duty; the man of "Dramatic Lyrics," of "Men and Women," of the "Ring and the Book," of "A Blot on the

'Scutcheon," of "Pippa Passes," of "Colombe's Birthday," of everything, more or less, of the order of these,—this inscrutable personage sat at home and knew as well as he might in what quarters of *that* sphere to look for suitable company. The poet and the "member of society" were, in a word, dissociated in him as they can rarely elsewhere have been; so that, for the observer impressed with this oddity, the image I began by using quite of necessity completed itself: the wall that built out the idyll (as we call it for convenience) of which memory and imagination were virtually composed for him stood there behind him solidly enough, but subject to his privilege of living almost equally on both sides of it. It contained an invisible door through which, working the lock at will, he could softly pass and of which he kept the golden key—carrying the same about with him even in the pocket of his dinner-waistcoat, yet even in his most splendid expansions showing it, happy man, to none. Such at least was the appearance he could repeatedly conjure up to a deep and mystified admirer. Our point, at any rate, is that we see him vividly, during the early "sixties," in the letters before us; see him without mystery or attitude, with his explicit sense and his clear, full, masculine tone, the tone, ever,

of reason and cheer. He is always, to our conceit, on the hither side of the wall.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story,

"*Chez* M. Chauvin, St Enogat, *près* Dinard,
Ile-et-Vilaine, France,
Aug. 20*th*, 1861.

"My dear Friends,—For so let me write to you all as I was used to talk in those days which already seem so good and old. . . . I *did* leave Florence at last—on the 1st of this month—accompanied by Miss Blagden, who has devoted herself to me and P., disregarding health, inconvenience, and all other considerations. We took the straight road, and reached Paris at last—for, being encumbered with P.'s pony, we could not travel by express. I had meant to cross over to London for a day or two's talking with Arabel Barrett, but the prospect of going over the old ground, stopping at the old house, was too much, and I found it impossible to go further. Paris also is unbearable to me, and I only breathe freelier since we arrived at this wild, primitive and lonely place—Saint-Malo—with a solitary sea, bays, sands and rocks, and green, pleasant country. Miss Blagden left Paris on the 10th, in a very indifferent state of health, for London. I shall stay here till the

autumn sets in, perhaps a month longer; and then, after just a day or two spent in Paris, shall finally settle in London for the winter and spring. I mean to get a very good English tutor, capable of preparing P. for the university without, if possible, necessitating the passage through a public school; and if I delay this, as my original notion was, I may lose the critical time when the English stamp (in all that it is good for) is taken or missed. I have written to various friends about my projects, and shall be glad to profit by their experience. Such a school as dear E. described would have been desirable had he been brought up in England from the first, but I distrust all hybrid and ambiguous natures and nationalities and want to make something decided of him. I find, by myself, that one leans out the more widely over one's neighbour's field for being effectually rooted in one's own garden. . . . London may suit me better than a brighter place for some time to come; but I shall have no ties, no housekeeping, nothing to prevent me from wandering about if circumstances permit. I want my new life to resemble the last fifteen years as little as possible. It is idle talking just yet, however.

"I deeply feel with you about the disaster

at Bull's Run, so far as I know anything about it from having glanced at a single newspaper. I only know that the good cause has suffered and that we all suffer with it. As to scurrilous articles in the ——, I have had the satisfaction of never seeing the outside of that paper; but quite sure am I that its habit of deliberate maligning will have found exercise in this and every other matter interesting humanity. How can you mind such writing? I look to the end, to success, with every confidence; but, as I said, I have missed all the details of this misadventure. You must and will do better, and best, another time—and meanwhile the fewer big words on all sides, in any sense, the better!

"'Tannhauser' is written by Lytton and Julian Fane; the latter's are the songs, which are poor. Julian Fane wrote a volume years ago which the —— reviewed much in the way you now describe: I conclude that his father's being ambassador to Austria and his brother Earl of Westmorland now, has some little to do with the ——'s admiration. Lytton, to whom the best part of the book belongs, has no such influence. He gave me the book, told me Fane was publishing the secret everywhere, and spoke modestly enough about his own estimation of the thing. I have just heard

from him, by the way; he must be at Vienna by this time.

"And now it is hard to say good-bye, which of late years has always gone along with 'we shall so soon meet again, and so merrily.' Go you, dear Story, on in your admirable way— nor altogether without me, who shall continue as interested in your work as when I could see it in progress from the little door of the room by the garden."

I cannot (with any fidelity to our law of salutation of hovering shades) fail to take up the mention, in the above, of the devoted little friend who ministered to Browning at this time, who had been, in Italy, not less devoted to his wife, who came with him to England, who held herself at his service during so much of the after-period as she was herself, somewhat sparely, to enjoy on earth, and who, in particular, mingles her small, responsive, expressive presence with old Florentine memories. My own part in them, in this connection, is scant, yet such as it is it remains — the impression still has sharpness; so that I pause an instant before it even though over the shoulder of this particular ghost, and on the very spot where it stands, other ghosts, intenser, but necessarily nameless here, look out

with eyes that seem to ask if they too may not answer. Isa Blagden comes vaguely to light in Mrs Browning's letters, some of which, in the later Florentine years, are addressed to her; she figured also, not with much greater distinctness, I seem to recollect, on the covers of old Tauchnitz volumes, having contributed to that series the inevitable nice novel or two of the wandering English spinster. Above all, she had befriended the lonely, cheered the exile and nursed the sick; given herself indefatigably, for instance, to the care of Robert Lytton, during a long illness, in the good old days of casual tendance, before the dawn of the capped and cloaked, the now ubiquitous "trained." These friendships and generosities, in a setting of Florentine villas and views, of overhanging terraces and arched *pianterreni*, of Italian loyalties and English longings, of shy literary yearning and confessed literary starvation—these things formed her kindly little legend, and they still, after long years, melt together, for my personal reminiscence, into the springtime air of a garden at Bellosguardo. I feel again the sun of Florence in the morning walk out of Porta Romana and up the long winding hill; I catch again, in the great softness, the "accent" of the straight, black cypresses; I lose myself

again in the sense of the large, cool villa, already then a centre of histories, memories, echoes, all generations deep; I face the Val d'Arno, vast and delicate, as if it were a painted picture; in special I talk with an eager little lady who has gentle, gay black eyes and whose type gives, visibly enough, the hint of East-Indian blood. The villa had, as I say, a past then, and has much more of one now; which romantic actualities and possibilities, a crowd of international relations, hung about us as we lingered and talked, making, for the victim of this first impression of the place, a mere fond fable of lives led and work done and troubles suffered there. She had seen the procession, the human panorama, more or less polyglot; there were odd people—oh, "precursors" enough, in *her* list!—whom she had known, and of whom I knew; and then we had friends in common, figures of the Florentine legend, to my knowledge of whom she added; with which, moreover, there were wistful questions that were at the same time, for the passer-by, provocations of envy: the books she would have liked to read, the news she would have liked to get, the people she would have liked to see, amounting all, in their absence, as I remember ingenuously thinking, to nothing more than a sign of how deep

one might be in Italy. She had come back there after her pilgrimage to England with Browning, and it was from there, I recall, that I received in the after-years (none too many of them) that other and last sign of her that was to match with my Bellosguardo morning. It was an invitation to be one of the friends contributing to a memorial placed over her grave. It was wonderful how much we had talked; I had become one of the friends in that one hour.

There is a glimpse of Miss Blagden, and of other matters, in another letter.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story.

"St Enogat, *Aug. 30th*, 1861.

"I had a very exact picture made of the room in Casa Guidi, after vainly trying to get it photographed; and of this picture I have photographs, giving a sufficient idea of it, which I will send you. I think I shall not examine the state of my invaluable [negative] till I get to London.

"You must know that I feel your affection, as I remember all your past goodness; but I can't write about anything. I could perhaps speak, if we were together. But to write freezes me altogether. Tell me about yourselves—whatever interests you will deeply interest me. I

read no newspapers, know absolutely nothing of what has been going on the last two months. I feel impatient at doing nothing, and long to begin with P. . . . It will all come into use presently in our grim London. (It is ungrateful of me to say this, with so many kind friends proposing to put light into the coming gloomy winter, but I feel so, and may say so to *you.*)

"Miss Blagden will not return to Italy—at all events not before she has made an endeavour to live in England. She goes to Clifton, in all probability, where Miss Cobbe is to see her comfortably settled. I cannot believe she will bear the change. She has given up her villa, where she was counting upon a joyous summer with Hatty [Hosmer]. I blame her for all this, but unquestionably like her for it.

"Don't tell anybody about *those rooms.* I should hate to hear that the first who could climb the staircase had entered in and taken possession. This is very silly, I know. But I only think and write sillinesses just now. The staying at Casa Guidi was not the worst of it. I kept in my place there like a worm-eaten piece of old furniture, looking solid enough; but when I was *moved* I began to go to pieces. I am getting 'mended up' here, and shall no doubt

last my proper time, for all the past. Landor remains under my care. Lytton is very kind—has written to me three times this fortnight: he is at Vienna."

Browning's letters, at this moment, were as interesting, as frankly and heartily personal, as they were frequent, and I give them as they come.

Robert Browning to the Storys.

"1 Chichester Road, Upper Westbourne Terrace, *Nov.* 10*th*, 1861.

"The last day I spent at St Enogat I remember I was bent on writing an answer of some sort to the letters, brimful of kindness, which I had received just before. I had to go to St Malo, however, and could not get a clear quarter of an hour. I meant therefore to write on arriving at Paris. The end is that all this while I have said nothing, and, as a consequence, heard nothing. But you do know my feeling to you all, and whether it is likely to grow less now. I have one of my old headaches this morning, cannot attend to Pen, nor go out for a walk (in the rain), a duty of religion forced on me at leisure minutes; so I will chat a little with you, if you please, as if

I came in (in) the dear old way, taking my seat by the corner of the 'mobile,' whatever it should be called, where my elbow goes so well—and there you are in the customary places.

. . . "I had an adventure in going to Boulogne, was strangely misinformed as to the proper train—that which transports horses—and the people refused to take me. I proved the fault was theirs (having their printed paper to show, and also their officials'), and explaining the loss of time and money they would put me to unless I was suffered to take P.'s pony by the express-train (my own, that was to have been, went without me), I declared (in all good humour, for they were polite enough) that I would prosecute them: I was upwards of two hours in this weary work of battling with them. 'It could *not* be!'—but at the last moment, literally, it *was*. They pushed me into the train, put the horse-box on, which there was no time even to pay for, and so I got off, reached Boulogne in time to get the pony through the custom house, and consequently did not miss the boat to London which sailed two hours after midnight: missing, moreover, the accident which happened to the 'proper train for me,' which I certainly should have taken had they beaten me, which was run into by

another train at Amiens—having '22 wounded and 10 or 12 killed,' said 'The Times' two days after.

"Another strange thing happened while I was in the train. I had been thinking much of the meeting I had had with Tennyson ten years ago, when he was the first person I chanced upon in Paris: I must have told you, for it always impressed me. Well, I, in like manner, not having seen an English friend since I left Florence, put my head out of window at the Amiens station, when out came Tennyson and entered a carriage. He was changed, had a great beard, but I could not be deceived. At Boulogne I met him in the doorway and was reassured, but I kept out of sight. When the luggage was disposed of Pen proposed to go and see the quay; the Folkestone boat was on the point of starting. I said 'I'll show you Tennyson,' and presently he came forward with his wife and two beautiful children. They seated themselves a few yards from me; I pulled my hat over my face—not that they would have recognised me; and so saw them off. Odd, is it not, to leave Florence twice, and twice meet, for the first English face, Tennyson's? I wonder whether he also had missed the afternoon train and its smash.

. . . "My own time (to end with all this about myself) has every minute taken up: I have much to do with the printers, and shall have for some weeks more. I see nobody—have only called on people about business. There being what is called 'nobody in town,' there was no need to inquire who made the exception. I shall presently go about, I suppose, for people have been very kind indeed. Miss Blagden is opposite, in a house no further from this than your ballroom from the green drawing-room. She came last week and will stay three months at least—pleasantly for me.

. . . "It is not because I do not feel the deepest interest in the American news that I rather turn from writing about it—particularly to you who understand so much more, foresee and perhaps apprehend more than can the uninstructed here. The grin of the —— may be hard to bear, but indeed the feeling of the few people I see is altogether free from its malicious self-satisfaction. I never hear a word for the South even from those who think the North underestimated its strength and despair of a better issue than separation. *We* say fight it out to the last; but for English lookers-on, who abjure heroics, to say that, would be saying 'Do yourselves as much harm as you can.' The

Italian hope deferred again is also a weariness—but not worse, I think. Dear friends, we feel together, hope together—did so and will do so! Here is a 'length,' as the actors used to say. I can't stay longer with you in the cheerful home. . . ."

The last lines of the above refer of course to interests painfully present to Browning's correspondents; just as his next letter was to be the act of response to a demonstration that had broken, in all naturalness, from Story's irritated nerves. For history then, as happened, was making itself in relations markedly enough distinct from its immediate concern with our friends. There was a good deal of English feeling on the subject of the War of Secession with which Story was not, and could not be, especially acquainted; whereas the feeling with which he *was* acquainted, and which was then patent and flamboyant, had no message of comfort for his inflamed patriotism. The Roman studio, the poetic visions struggling, with their beauty and their indifference, into shape, soothed him at these hours in vain; so that he was moved, in their not very helpful company, to draw up a statement of the case of the North that might be brought before the English public.

He addressed himself to the task with characteristic vivacity and with an excellent result. Despatched to London, his paper—"The American Question"—appeared, by Browning's aid, in the form of three letters to the "Daily News" (December 26th, 27th, 28th, 1861), and was afterwards published as a pamphlet matching the pamphlet composed of the letters addressed shortly before to "The Times" by Mr Motley, the historian of the Dutch Republic, then United States Minister to Austria. Story's plea for the particular justice to his country that he had been so disappointed not to find is a remarkably lucid and temperate performance for a man whose affections were so much engaged. For a sculptor and a poet it is in fact a singularly methodical and reasonable document —of which there would be perhaps even more to say were it advisable to dive again with him into the deeps of the London newspaper-press of the time for the pearls of a tolerably turbid sea. Rich and rare are some of those produced by him in picturing the element of indignant virtue that was so striking a feature of the perversity against which he protests—an element that may surely now be felt, all round, to have contributed some of the rarest curiosities of "tone" to the queer museum of

history. It may be added that, on the dismal "Trent" episode in especial, Browning is as clear and explicit as his friend.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story.

"1 Chichester Road, *Dec.* 17*th*, 1861.

"Dearest Friends, and dearer than ever just now! . . . I will go this morning and see with Edward Dicey what is to be done. I *much* fear little or nothing, beyond some cost of publishing, which you may expect, I should say. Perhaps immediate circulation, even in a cheap and popular paper, would put your thoughts into thousands of heads at once, would be better than any delay in trying for the more dignified journals, and certainly than the pamphlet form: this miserable affair of the 'Trent' has so changed the object of interest for the moment. I have not even glanced at your writing, so anxious am I to assure you at once on all the above-mentioned points, but I know that we agree in feeling *here*, as in other matters—and probably do not differ even in appreciation of facts, as in old subjects of disputes when our feelings went equally together. I think English judgment of the Northern procedures has been wrong from the beginning—just as of the French procedures (will you let me say?) in Italy: our people ex-

pected in both cases that the pure and simple rights in the case would be declared and vigorously carried out without one let or stop. 'Italy shall be free, and Slavery abolished, absolutely, at once and for ever.' At the first hesitation in face of difficulties we cried out 'Italy will *not* be freed, nor Slavery extinguished, after all'; and our sympathy stopped and irritation began, as if the spirit of all we would have sympathised in were not actively alive all the time, and, taking the crooked road to walk, in this poor world, is only reached by a straight one 'as the crow flies'—far above our heads and rather near the heaven. The *spirit* of all Mr Lincoln's acts is altogether against Slavery in the end; but in apprehension of the result of losing the uncertain States he declared his intention to be quite otherwise.

"*You* understand this, and the English did *not*, and so all the work of the —— was 'cut out for it,' and, just as in the Italian case, every measure now taken by the North in the direction, plainer and plainer, of complete Emancipation, will be considered as 'forced upon them.' It seems besides as if no mistakes on one part can be met without two or more mistakes on the other, to make up for their coming late into observation; so the malice of the —— provoked

abuse enough on your side, and threatenings quite beside the question: because our neutrality, poor, hard, cold thing indeed, was the worst you had to expect and in no moment of the fear of a terrible result for the cotton-operatives here, did any one dream of taking part with the South. This sad affair of the 'Trent' puts all this away, however; our people hold to the *bone* they have got in their jaws this time, that a naval lieutenant is not an admiralty-judge. If you put things as they were, so far as possible, let the prisoners be restored with an acknowledgment that the seizure was wrong. I think the 'Trent' ought in fairness to be considered as taken into one of your ports and subject to adjudicature: if our lawyers are right you will have to restore her and pay for the detention; if your authorities, the ship is yours, envoys and all. There is remedy for our wrong in the legal way, and no other; but you are too likely to say 'The ship would be confiscated, the damages infinitely greater; this twitching the sum in dispute out of the waistcoat-pocket is kinder than issuing writs and imprisoning the debtor' —while *he* demurs: 'If the debt be disproved after all, the writ and expenses will all fall on *you;* whereas carry off my money and I lose *that* decidedly, right or wrong. Moreover, you

treated me thus at Charing Cross!' So it seems we may fairly say and *you* fairly do; but who can be sure he sees clearly, with the bad blood setting toward the head?

"Come what will, I, insignificant unit, can make no 'war' in my soul with my truest brother and friend. No one ever had cause to love a country better than I, who have so long been only not an American because people can hardly experience such generosity except as strangers; nor do I mean ever to go into the matter again with you, dearest of all American friends, which our respective lawyers will wrangle out for some time yet, I *hope*. Here is a first bitter fruit of the business, that this letter, which I have been meaning every day to write in reply to your two precious budgets of home news that gave me pleasure like pain and pain like pleasure, so recently — this letter proves, as you see, something altogether foreign to what it should be if true to my heart and responsive to yours. It is all written, moreover, while Pen is practising at my elbow on a grand piano in a very little London room. My minutes (I don't know whether I began by saying) are numbered and disposed of from morning till night. I never had so much to do or so little pleasure in doing it, or anything. Having scribbled what I really

doubt whether you or anybody else can read or understand, in determination to say something at once, I will leave off for a day or two. All regards and remembrances from us both to the Abbé when you see him."

And the writer resumes, after a short interval, with the same excellent lucidity.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story.

"1 Chichester Road, Upper Westbourne Terrace, *Dec.* 31*st*, 1861.

"You must have received the three numbers of the 'Daily News' (Dec. 25, 26, 27) containing your paper Dicey sent them; all your thanks are due to *him*. I put the MS. in his hands at once, and he succeeded in his endeavour, as you see; but unluckily there was no time to refer to Mr Adams. The editor said this 'slack week's' occasion must be seized, and so good an occasion was not let slip; for indeed every day puts the past question deeper in the background beside the terrible interest of the new question altogether distinct from it. The inaccuracies therefore must be corrected in the pamphlet, should you please to reprint it *so;* Mr Adams has been communicated with, and no doubt will explain if needful. Your position so far from London

makes very excusable the slip to which you refer; those cases have been turned and tried, till they are dry dust now, and it is true that Americans and English *here* are of one mind about them. Oh, the pity of it all! Capt. Wilkes with his instincts and law-studies *extemporary*, and notion of 'embodied despatches'! To quarrel about such a man's 'notions'! And no words, nor love indeed, on this side, can help it all! Indeed you are wrong as to men's 'fury' here! I have not heard one man, woman or child express anything but dismay at the prospect of being obliged to go to war on any grounds with America; but every one felt there might be an obligation as stringent as a slap on the face in public from one's bosom friend. But I've done. . . . This new dear letter comes warmly into the grey cold corner where I am keeping alive this last day of my last good year. Next year, next hundred years will change nothing in my gratitude and love. I mean to go out and see friends as I used. I shall be able to gossip with *you*. Meantime I run in and shake hands and sit by the fire as of old, see you always and love you always."

It was all a question, a danger, at the overdarkened hour, that could not easily drop.

Robert Browning to the Storys.

"1 Chichester Road, *Jan.* 21*st*, 1862.

"I wrote two hurried letters to you, weeks ago, about the American letter, and meant to say something more leisurely at the first opportunity—which is *now*, and not earlier; you shall hear why. . . . I at last write the word or two which your kindness will take as if they were worthier. First, I am very glad that, on the whole, the matter of the Letter may be pronounced successful through Dicey's energy and opportunities. It would have been better could the supervision have been given to Mr Adams, as he wished, but the great point was to secure such an advantage as the columns of the 'Daily News,' a first-class paper—and you understand that, no doubt. I don't remember whether I told you my own poor opinion of the extreme cleverness of the exposition of the question. The 'Trent' affair was necessarily less complete in its handling than we should have found it had you been nearer the law-books. Of my heartfelt delight in the issue of *that* thing, why try and speak? Don't mind the mean, vindictive ——; every one here understands the difficulties that have had to be overcome, and thinks the reparation complete and handsome too. The purpose of the North is also under-

stood at last, and if the event of the struggle seems less certain here than to your politicians, there is no longer the notion that 'Slavery had nothing to do with it.' The 'Commissaries' will be received with the contempt they deserve, and the antecedents of both gentlemen are kept profitably in mind here. On the other hand, this blocking-up Charleston seems inconsistent with any hope of eventual success on your side; for what will you do if Charleston becomes loyal again? There may be better reasons for such a step than we can see; let us hope so. Dicey will be a good interpreter, at least, of Northern intentions and accomplishments; he is gone, you know, for some months. I gave him a few letters; you, however, will do whatever he wants in that way, and as hardly anybody else can. I am heartily glad he goes.

"Of myself—so little to say; my life is as grey (or yellow) as this sky, one snow-bank above head at this minute. I make up my mind from week to week—*next* Monday I will begin and call on my friends. But this fortnight of anxiety was a real excuse. *Next* week I still say. I see hardly anybody, but mean, I assure you, to alter all that for abundance of reasons. I have got, besides, a tutor to my mind—rather than to Pen's perhaps; but he is

sound to the core in grammatical niceties. . . . My end of life, and particular reward for myself, will be, one day years hence, to just go back to Italy, to Rome, and die as I lived, when I used really to live. If you knew—but you *do* know, and can conceive, how precious every mud-splash on the house-walls of Rome is, how every minute of those last six months in Rome would *melt up* into gold enough for a year's use now, if I had it! But I have *not*, and must think of something else—as that you at least are there, where you were, as you were. But come here, all the same; for you can go back, you know. Surely you will all come—will you not?—for the Exposition, which (I told you truly in my last note) is to go on just as it was intended. Let me know what you do intend, and how far advanced is the Sibyl. And, dear Mrs Story, do *you* please write me more of those letters that I was so delighted to have and that stopped of a sudden: why? I will try and make some sort of return in my lame way by repeating to *you* all the news that occurs when I go my rounds and see people you know—whose very letters are in a pile here unanswered, but not always to remain so (observed for the hundredth time).

"You may know—what I have left out in my

account of the daily work—that I have been painfully engaged with the printers and am not yet absolutely out of their hands. The book, advertised long ago by the publisher, will not appear for a month at least. I shall send it to you the first thing. (Since writing this paragraph arrives an invitation from Miss Wynn to dine and meet Mr Maurice only, and I have accepted it as I said I would.) I have just written to Cartwright—for the first time since I was here. Very black it looks when actually put on paper. Dear Story, tell me what you can about the studio; let me smell the wet clay once more and hear the birds and the goat through that dear little door to the left. I would send my kind remembrances to M. Boncinelli if he cared to have them, and he may, in his good nature. Have you to do still with that clever Lombard artist? Probably not; but as for your being idle, I don't believe it. By-the-by, Mrs Cholmondeley wrote the other day and mentioned the death of poor Gajassi: if there is a sale of his effects and the cast of Byron's head by Thorwaldsen (with his 'points' on it) is to be sold for what you consider a moderate price, I should be glad to have it—supposing that there is no trouble to you and that Boncinelli attends such sales as of old. Keep it in your studio 'till

I come.' I want you to tell the many and true friends I have in Rome and elsewhere, when you write to them, how they are all like portraits in the one habitable room of a house; I go in among them many a time in the course of the day and night. And now good-bye. If you knew how the minutest news of your daily life interest me you would register every chip picked up on the carpet. How is Wild? I have his picture of P. facing me. Give him my true love. But you need no telling how I think of old friends. Don't forget to remember me most kindly and particularly to Mrs Dicey—to Lady William (Russell). How is *she?* The accident had just happened, and I have heard nothing, of course, since your letter. There is no protracting this final shaking of hands in decency."

This next has especial interest as giving us a small fact of biographic value not, I believe, to be found elsewhere.

Robert Browning to the Storys.

"1 Chichester Road, *March 19th*, 1862.

"Three letters, from one or another of you!—and the pleasure they gave me I can't, honestly can't, tell you. Will it be told you in any degree by the fact that I sit down at once to

obey the desire in the last (that carried by Miss Gaskell) 'that I should write just a word *at once'?* Here is the word, never minding the injustice it does the many things calling for many words; but my time is almost wholly taken up, first by work of a morning, then by going out of evenings. Did you not bid me do that too? I ought to be able to return your news by mine, and tell particularly *who* was where, as you do so pleasantly; but it really goes out of my head the next morning. Moreover, what a difference between your Roman names and such as I might remember! I *will* remember some. . . . I dine to-night with Emerson Tennent—but I can't go on with the week's work; enough is said to show you that I try and see old friends, when my true *treat* would be an evening over the piles of unread books, or a morning with the old coat and wet clay. Oh, the days! Well, Rossetti has had a miserable loss of his wife a month ago; she took an overdose of laudanum one evening—they had dined out, returned early, and he had left her for his class at the working-men's 'Institution.' Coming back, he found her in a stertorous, unnatural sleep, and presently found an empty bottle. He got assistance, but in vain. He is in trouble indeed, poor kind fellow. I

met Dickens at dinner the other day, looking very well and young. Thackeray has just resigned the editorship of the 'Cornhill.'

"Why should I not trust to you what I know you will keep to yourselves, but what will certainly amuse you as nothing else I could write is like to do? What good in our loving each other unless I do such a thing? So, O Story, O Emelyn (dare I say, for the solemnity's sake?) and O Edie—the editorship has, under the circumstances, &c., &c., been offered to *me!* I really take it as a compliment because I am, by your indulgence, a bit of a poet if you like, but a man of the world and able editor hardly! They count on my attracting writers—I who could never muster *English* readers enough to pay for salt and bread! My first answer was prompt enough—that my life was done for and settled, that I could not change and would not; but the conveyer of the message bade me consider, in a flattering way, and I took the week to do so accordingly. I can't be sure how I shall answer—that's the end; for I have rather an impulse, first to get the salary, which P. might find something to do with, next to figure as a man actually capable of choosing better articles from the quantity always on hand, and last to try what the business is like.

It requires merely editing—no line of my own writing (*that* would be another matter). On the other hand, the little to do ought to be honestly done, might take more of my time than I choose to part with—and what do I want with more money? I shall diplomatise accordingly—write for a full statement of what I am expected to do if I accept, and what, and for how long, I am to receive in that case. One farthing less than Thackeray got, apart from the price of his substantive articles, I shall not take, of course; and if I don't like the terms the publishers have my bow, I have my little piece of satisfied conceit, and *you* have what is amusing you dear three, I engage!

"Seriously, now that I care not one whit about what I never cared for too much, people are getting good-natured to my poems. There's printing a book of 'Selections from R. B.' (SCULPTOR and poet) which is to popularise my old things; and So-and-so means to review it, and Somebody-or-other always was looking out for such an occasion, and What's-his-name always said he admired me, only he didn't say it, though he said something else every week of his life in some journal. The breath of Man! . . . I went to Paris three weeks ago and saw my father to heart's content

(in his eightieth year and strong as thirty years ago); saw no one else but Mme. Du Quaire, and came back on the eighth day. I wish the absence from London could be to-morrow: the little book[1] is to be published, and if books were to be distinguished as formerly by a great red edging, this ought to have something of the kind round it without help from the printer. Reviewers will have my heart in their rough hands for the next month or two. But I am not very formidable; witness Mr Thornton Hunt, who has *not* printed the letter of his father's which I meant to give him, but in place of it, without a word to me (as he confesses in his preface), is printed *our* letter to his father! He knew I should have refused leave to print such a thing in the most energetic terms possible—so he takes leave. It is hardly worth noticing further that he prints my writing, which he can't read, so as to make it pure nonsense in parts—as he also confesses in his preface. He has printed William's letter to him as well as the letter of his father, but there was reason for *that* in the nature of the communication. I ought to be angry, but can't. I shall simply, when quite sure of myself, write and say what I think of his proceeding, and

[1] The Selections just mentioned.

then propose to give his father's letter in exchange for the one actually printed, which he shall cancel. There's nothing in my letter I care about except the indecent nature of the exposure: it's just as if, being at my toilette, some clownish person chose to throw the bedroom door wide. There's enough of it.

. . . "Of friends, I rejoice heartily in the recovery of Lady William, and will write a word to her since you encourage me. I had indeed thought of doing so. . . . Mrs Procter was told by a believing friend that Mr Home 'particularly felt the annoyance of being perpetually confounded with the Mr Hume Mr Browning insulted and Mr Trollope abused—it was quite another man!' Eh, my friends? Thank the dear Abbé for his loving word. I will write to you again, but give me another drink of the Roman air when you can, to send me rejoicing through the grey, drear lengths of days here."

With the social ramifications of our friends (and of *their* friends) in England the hovering ghosts so multiply that to follow all our clues would lead us well over the limit of our subject. These allusions, these figures moreover represent in many cases lives but recently extinct. Other-

wise how pass Mme. Du Quaire without a greeting?—how not instinctively pause at her name as we used to pause, whenever we did pass, at the friendly little door in Wilton Street behind which it was ever a reminder of her art of entertainment that the tiny and much-encumbered house, the little red drawing-room, decorated not only, but practically furnished, with miniatures, snuff-boxes and other social relics (I give at least what seems to me, after a long interval, to have been my amused impression), reconciled the generous amplitude of her person with the boundless extent of her acquaintance and the emphasis of her kindness to those she judged most in want of it? I think of the circumference of her round table, under the suspended French dinner-lamp, in the little room densely garnished with old engraved portraits; I wonder again at the single heaped dish of southern fruit in the middle, all yellow and green and purple, vast as some embossed tray held up by a blackamoor in a Veronese picture; I recall agreeable and interesting folk who lived in the light of their time, but each of whom, as I pass from name to name in the list, would now answer with silence if the name were called. Her friends were like a family bred to harmony of intercourse and left in charge

of a strong, soft, humorous, mildly-mothering, absolutely indulgent elder sister. And the silence of the roll deepens when I go back to still more distant Paris days and the old red house on the river, that of a common acquaintance, opposite the Louvre, in which I first met her. The salon of Mme. de Blocqville, *née* d'Eckmühl, daughter of Marshal Davoust—*that* is truly a cluster showing gaps that help it to resemble, for the imagination, some riddled Napoleonic array. Of old Northumberland race, married to a Frenchman, then widowed, childless, and loving the world, of which she took an amused view, Mme. Du Quaire seemed in those days, with a home on each side of the Channel, to have had neither in Paris nor in London a sacrifice to make. She had kept each intimacy without giving up the other—which was really to know how to live. But on the threshold of the great chamber of London memories, I remind myself, the step must yet a while falter and the voice not be loud. I none the less venture to recollect that this lady was a great friend to Kinglake, who is mentioned, though but in his character of historian, in the following letter, and also a great friend to Mrs Procter; and she was interesting on the subject of the difference that had parted these two for years.

She knew how little there was "in it"; she knew the name of the lady—which was interesting, assuredly, when one happened to have knowledge to match; she appreciated the gentleman's embarrassment in presence of the condition exacted. "Tell me you're in *love* with her, and I'll forgive your resenting what I said about her. Without that you had no right to resent it. So if you weren't in love, there we are." There they were indeed, since Kinglake was neither in love nor, in the particular case, likely to be: whereby he was unable to meet the condition — which, distinct and final, was, quite in the grand manner, never abated.

W. W. Story to Charles Eliot Norton.

"Rome, *March 19th*, 1863.

. . . "To-day is San Giuseppe's *festa*, and in every square the *frittate* are hissing under the decorated booths. Besides, we make three cardinals this morning at the Consistory, and all our party are assisting at this ceremony by lending it the honour of their presence. They thought it fair to do this, as they were at the great reception of the new cardinals the other evening. Russell and Julian (Sturgis) are to join the rest here in about ten days, and I am really glad that he can get a run if only

for a month, so as to change the course of his life.

"My winter ever since I returned from England has been full of hard work, and to-day, for the first time since December came in, have I an hour which is free. My Saul is finished, and the tornatore is at work upon it, so that I am as vain and useless at my studio as a partner who has been turned out of the firm. I believe I have told you about my statue before, but cannot recollect. He is seated, and I have represented him at the moment when the evil spirit is upon him and David is called in to play to him. The action is all interior—the struggle of a half-demented soul; one hand clutching his beard and one fumbling at his dagger. I think it my best work, but no man is judge of his own. Did we not, however, believe in the thing on which we are engaged we could never have the heart or enthusiasm to go on with it. I should like you to see it, but unless you come here you never will, for it seems that no important work of mine ever is to go to America.

"I hope you will ere this have received a copy of 'Roba di Roma'—yet one never can tell! The book seems to have met with success—it is already going into a second edition.

Yet I have not heard one word about it from America; like everything else of mine it drops still-born there. Perhaps they will wake up when they find it is liked in England.

"I received a lively letter from Hamilton Wild the other day, promising to return here soon, but I am afraid if he waits for exchange to go down I shall wait some time before seeing him. I was rejoiced to find that you look upon our War prospects with so cheerful a hope. From this side the water things look dreary enough, and I confess that at times my fears outrun my hopes. The Government at Washington has in my opinion nearly compromised our future by its course, and if we go on as we have been going for the last six months I am afraid it will all be up with us. Stanton and Halleck are completely inefficient, and the former seems to me to be devoted to feathering his own political nest. The only man in whom I have the least confidence is McClellan, and I think if he were not tied by the leg and the string hitched to the White House he would in three months change the whole aspect of things. Has not all he said and prophesied been completely justified? He was turned out for slowness, but have we made any advance since he left?

"Have you read Kinglake's book? It has

not arrived here, and I have only seen extracts, but his character of Louis Napoleon is said to be most masterly, and from all I hear and see I think I should entirely agree with him. My detestation of that man is unutterable; I never can forgive him his crimes. This poor people is under his feet, and I see no issue for the present from their difficulties. The Pope is in precarious health and may die any day—or may live for years. But I cannot see that his death would affect the question. I believe that L. N. has no intention, under any circumstances, of leaving Rome. Nothing would bring him to this but a revolution in France or a series of pistol-shots at him in Paris. Orsini forced him to befriend Piedmont, and another Orsini may compel him to leave Rome. We have had a gay and pleasant winter, warm and genial weather, and numbers of agreeable people. The Carnival was very dull because the Comitato asked the Italians not to go into the Corso, but balls and parties of every kind have abounded. Arthur Dexter is here with his mother. Secession has its allies in . . ."

The almost fanatical faith of which General McClellan was the object on the part of many persons at the North during the middle period

of the Civil War is fairly ancient history now—and the more ancient from the fact that the controversy was to die a natural death almost immediately after it had fiercely raged. But, for those who can remember, Story's reference gives it a spectral actuality, renews the "feeling of the time"—that feeling of the time which so often makes itself intense as from the sense of its only chance, of foreknowing that it will scarce be the feeling of any other time. This indeed may still leave other times generously tender to it—besides which Story was nearly related, through his wife, to McClellan, who was his guest in Rome at the close of the war. After which tribute to public history I feel a pang at having to brush almost in silence by the bearer of the name last pronounced in the above, perfectly private though the allusion. One must have perhaps almost a morbid memory—or certainly an extravagant interest in the mere fellow-creature, the mere honourable gentleman—to feel tempted by every clue held out by handsome young men of leisure, of fortune, of "artistic tastes," of clever conversation, of filial piety; passionately devoted, that is, to admirable mothers and steeped, for the golden fusion of effect, in the old Barberini air. So I leave this decorative figure—as that is how I seem

to recall it—to that Italian *envoi* of Story's "Graffiti d'Italia" which I have already had occasion to mention; taking up my tale with another letter, undated, but of the same or the following season.

W. W. Story to Charles Eliot Norton.

"Rome [1863 or 1864].

. . . "Rome has been filled to overflowing with strangers this season, and we have had a very gay and pleasant society, particularly among the English. They have done for me what the Americans would have seen me rot rather than do, and I must feel grateful. Among others Coventry Patmore has been and is here, and I see a good deal of him and like him very much. He and De Vere hunt in couples, and I suspect De Vere talks a good deal of Catholicism into him. But it does not take root. . . . Miss Cushman is mouthing it as usual, and has her little satellites revolving around her. Tilton has been improving remarkably, and has painted some really beautiful pictures this year. He is almost the only one of all the American artists with whom I can have anything to do. The American permanent society here is very low, eaten up by jealousy and given shockingly to cabal and scandal. Our Legation is no legation

at all. —— is a pleasant enough man and his wife a pleasant enough woman, but their tongue is solely American, and they do nothing and see nothing, have no house—that is, never receive, never go into any society but that of the Americans, where he likes to play cards with M. and Co. The great Cushman patronises them, and Mrs —— nestles under her wing. Our real representative (do not blush and deny it, for it is the plain fact) is J. C. H., who writes himself on his card 'Secretaire de la Légation des Etats Unis près le Saint-Siège,' though he has not a shadow of right to do so as I understand, and goes to the diplomatic dinners as our representative and parades about in his diplomatic dress, with sword and gold lace, and introduces his friends into the diplomatic box at all the ceremonies, to the immense disgust of the diplomatic ladies, and in a word entirely supersedes our Minister, who cannot speak a word of French. Nobody refers anything to ——, and he merely economises here and says he cannot afford to receive. Of course everybody knows what H. is, and of course our Legation is in consequence at the lowest ebb, the jeer of the diplomatic circle. I assure you that my cheeks tingle sometimes to hear the remarks made, and justly made too, so that I cannot answer. I do not

mean to say anything against the ——s, who, in their way, are agreeable and amiable. He is a very intelligent man—only entirely out of place.

"We had last night a great illumination in honour of the Pope and St Agnes, on the anniversary of the miraculous interposition of the Madonna by which his life was saved when the Church of S. Agnese fell. The Piazza Navona was a superb spectacle; all across the square were great transparent globes of light; from the windows coloured lanterns were suspended, and little lamps starred the eaves and façades, while crimson Bengal lights glared in the centre, round the fountains that seemed to pour wine, and reddened the churches and palaces. Of course the whole thing was enforced, but the spectacle was beautiful. I just hear that a bomb was thrown into the Piazza Minerva and a man killed. The condition of things here is turbulent; the people are very weary of tyranny, and the Papal troops constantly come to blows with the French. The Pope is not well, has erysipelas in his leg, which grows worse every year, and was unable to perform the usual functions at Easter. But he may live for years yet. Until he dies there is no hope, and even then I see no prospect, for the French will not withdraw,

and until they retire what can the Romans do? —I hear that Hamilton Wild is coming out in May. So much the better; he ought not to stay any longer in America; his place is here, and he is wasting his life there. We shall be delighted indeed to greet him again. Pray tell him from me not to stay in America any longer."

Story had meanwhile, besides writing a great deal of verse, been turning to literary account, in prose, those impressions of the aspects and manners of Rome, its current life, public and private, which had had time, since his first visit in 1848, to store themselves in his spirit. This attempt had taken the form of papers contributed, at uneven intervals, to the "Atlantic Monthly," and which now had so accumulated as to make matter for a substantial book. The book, in 1863, was about to appear, and Browning, helpful and wise, had undertaken to overlook, in London, the publication. I have before me the two volumes in which it thus came forth, decorated with the book-plate—the name, escutcheon and crest—of Anthony Trollope. The book was eminently successful, and but that the aspects it mainly celebrates have suffered more alteration during the last quarter of a century than for (one is tempted to say) many centuries

before, it would remain an all-competent and charming companion for the city in Europe in which we most find ourselves desiring a sympathetic fellow-rambler. It did indeed for many years play this part—as to its original happy performance of which in my own case I retain a memory so fond and grateful that I perhaps scarce can speak of "Roba di Roma" with proper detachment. The golden air, as I look over its pages, makes a mist; I read them again in the light of old personal perceptions and emotions; I read, as we say, too much into them, too many associations, pictures, *other* ineffaceable passages. I remember perfectly the consuming envy kindled, on my part, at first, by the sense of an impregnation with the subject at which it seemed to me I could never hope to arrive, and at which the writer must have arrived by all sorts of delightful steps and contacts, any quantity of exquisite experience. It summed up, with an extraordinary wealth of statement, with perpetual illustration and image, the incomparable *entertainment* of Rome, where almost everything alike, manners, customs, practices, processes, states of feeling, no less than objects, treasures, relics, ruins, partook of the special museum-quality. Story rambles through his multitudinous subject as from room to room,

up and down its many staircases and through its endless corridors, quite as if showing a friend some crowded collection with which habit has made him familiar. His multifarious reading, his love of curious knowledge, of enumeration and detail, of discussing "points," historic, æsthetic, linguistic, literary, here overflows, shows the sense of "evidence" as a thing in his blood, that passion for small cumulative facts which made him, under pressure of his lore, amplify the chapter on the Evil Eye into the treatise subsequently published with the somewhat too merely-enumerative monograph on the Castle of St Angelo. But I used to think, I remember, that the great challenge to envy was in the little evoked visions of that out-of-the-season Rome to which one had one's self to be a stranger, the Rome of the Romans only, of the picture-making populace, both in the city and the small hill-towns, who lead their lives as the sun gets low on the long summer days and the clear shade spreads like a tent above the narrow, sociable streets. To read these passages over is to taste and feel again the very air of early rambles, when one was always agaze; to hear the sounds, to smell the dust, to give one's self up once more as to the thing that was ancient and noble even when homely or sordid, the thing

that might be mean but that yet couldn't be vulgar, the thing condemned, in spite of itself, in spite of weakness or ugliness or other offence, to be mysteriously interesting. There is a long passage of the chapter "Villeggiatura" which gathers into a cluster the various different notes of the writer's observation—a passage too long wholly to quote, but which I would fain send the reader back to the book to find.

"There is a crowd round the fountain, where women are filling their great copper vases with water and pausing to chat before they march evenly home under its weight like stout caryatids. Broad-horned white oxen drag home their creaking waggons. In the distance you hear the long monotonous wail of the peasant's song as he returns from his work, interrupted now and then with a shrill scream to his cattle. White-haired goats come up the lanes in flocks, cropping as they go the overhanging bushes, and, mounting up the bank, they stare at you with yellow glassy eyes and wag their beards. Down the slopes of the pavement jar along ringing files of wine-carts going towards Rome, while the little Pomeranian dog who lives under the triangular hood in front is running about on the piled wine-casks and uttering volleys of little sharp yelps and barks as the cars rattle

through the streets. If you watch the wine-carriers down into the valley you will see them pull up at the wayside fountains, draw a good flask of red wine from one of the casks and then replace it with good fresh water. . . . Nothing can be more exquisite than these summer nights in Italy. The sky itself, so vast, tender and delicate, is like no other sky. The American sky is bluer, but harder, more metallic. There is all the difference between the two that there is between a feeling and an opinion. As you stand on one of the old balconies or walk along the terraces of the Frascati villas, looking down over the mysterious Campagna and listening to the continuous plash of fountains and the song of nightingales, you feel Italy, the Italy of Romeo and Juliet. . . . The waves of the cool, delicate air, passing over orange and myrtle groves and breathing delicately against the brow and cheeks, seem to blow open the inmost leaves of the book on which youth painted its visionary pictures with the colours of dreams. In a word we say this is Italy, the Italy we dreamed of; not the Italy of fleas, couriers, mendicants and postilions, but of romance, poetry and passion."

It is interesting to meet in the following a passage that has something of the quality of

the writer's studies of imagined or reconstituted character, some monologue of "Dramatic Lyrics" or "Men and Women."

Robert Browning to the Storys.

"19 WARWICK CRESCENT, UPPER WESTBOURNE TERRACE, *May 2nd*, 1863.

"DEAREST FRIENDS, — What a time since I have heard from you! I got a letter from Story nearly a month ago—a full chord; and then, instead of striking up myself, I began to count my how many bars' rest—thirty days of it about; always meaning to lead off with a fresh subject presently! If I had written *two* days after, and told you any little thing—for instance, how I went the day after to Chapman's and found that he had already printed off the first volume and was working double tides to despatch the second—you would have, some one of you three, replied to me as you will now. To go on — I easily reconciled myself to the perhaps fortunate impossibility of chopping and changing—a vile business. Your book has succeeded remarkably—Chapman told me two days ago that he was getting rapidly through the new edition. The praises have been universal and hearty; why not let 'well' alone? And we *must* this time. But so you will next time

if you take my advice. Next, 'Saul'—I wish you and us all joy of it. I know it will be all I hope. Arthur Russell speaks in the highest terms of it, and other opinions in the same sense have reached me. That is right. And now, the new statue, what will that be? Give me another to expect.

"I told Mrs Story what I thought about the pleasant charge against that hardened reprobate, Don Juan *redivivus* and so on, poor dear good simple ——. His sister's defection doesn't surprise me one bit more than his wife's, though on quite different grounds. I never knew but a very little of Miss X., who was, had one cared to look into the matter, a far more curious study than her sister-in-law; for you had a person neither stupid, nor vain, nor pretentious, nor scheming, nor false in any discernible way, who yet, for some inexplicable reason, chose not to see, or by some miracle would not see, what must have been perked in her face daily and hourly. You know that those inventions about 'spirits,' &c., were not at all more prodigious than the daily-sprouting toadstools of that dunghill of a soul—lies about this, that and the other. I am convinced that even her husband caught a sight of these; indeed more than once came full upon some outrageous specimen and then resolutely shut

his eyes and said black should be white to the end of the chapter. But then *he* was in love. I remember once inadvertently telling him something she had said about an invitation 'she had reluctantly accepted to please *him*'—whereas, as he cried in amazement, 'she had forced *him* to go purely to please her.' I saw his face change, and was afraid he would go home and explode: not he! It was gulped down and ignored thenceforth and forever. But for his sister to gulp and ignore—I can't explain. But it must have been so, and I shall continue to believe that *here* has been a swallow of a camel, where no gnats nor blackbeetles have been 'strained at.' My own fancy is that the intercourse with Lady Y. has fired Z. with a noble emulation—the interest and mystery of the 'injured wife,' the glory of becoming a Lady—in 24 months; and from the *wanting this* to the oldest of old ways of *getting this* was, as Hamlet says, 'as easy as lying.' The more I discover the perfect ease of it the more do I feel humbled before minds so made that to them the immense difficulty of lying appeared an impossibility; made to accept Z. with her wallet of wares for an angel laden with roses. *I* accept her now as a familiar blotch on a picture of the past, and I solaced myself the other day by placing two portraits of her on

each side of a delicious drawing of a 'model' in the costume of Truth, just given to me by Leighton. I should like above most things to have a good talk with her: no hurting *me*, alas!

"Lady William more and more dear and delightful. She suffers much, but recovers soon. I am hopeful as to the result, and that she will yet walk as she can talk. I dine with her to-day: she always asks (did ask two days since) 'when I heard last from you.' Let me tell her something soon."

The Storys meanwhile were returning to Siena for this summer.

Robert Browning to the Storys and their Daughter.

"Ste.-Marie, près Pornic, Brittany,
Sept. 5th, 1863.

. . . "I shall only scribble a word or two and leave myself in your hands and hearts. Here are we in the old place, just as we left it last year, and I rather like it better on acquaintance. The barrenness of the country is not a bad thing—the silence and surrounding sea all one could wish. The weather, however, is broken up and autumnal; they say here that never was so hot and unvaried a summer—we came in for the end of it. Not that I object

to the blusterous winds and bursts of rain, but the bathing gets colder. I bathe duly and fancy it is particularly good for me, body and spirit. . . . Rossetti I saw just before I quitted London; he lives after an easy fashion in a large old house at Chelsea, amid carvings and queernesses of every picturesque kind. I will certainly give him your message and remembrance on my return. . . . Now I have done with England and all in it, let me breathe Siena to the end of my five minutes. It was indeed stupid to fancy you could have been unfaithful to the old villa, but the 'Orr'-name used to be enough for me. There is something in this place that brings Siena to my mind *always*. No two places were ever more unlike, but the autumn feeling, winter cares, comparative idleness and stoppage of one's life, besides the stillness—these are here as they used to be there. . . . Oh, (Louis) Napoleon! do we really differ so thoroughly about him after all? No understanding comes out of talk on such questions, because one presses to the support of the weaker points—not necessarily untenable, but weak; and the end is *these* seem the argument. But I never answer for what any man *may* do, if I try and appreciate what he *has* done; my opinion of the solid good rendered years ago is unchanged. The subsequent

deference to the clerical party in France and support of brigandage is poor work, but it surely is doing little harm to the general good. As for the party of action one sees the main chance tolerably clear from this distance: Austria is uncommonly strong just now, and if Italy attacks her without France to help she will rue it, that's too likely. . . . Well, two of my English years have slipped away. If I live (and I am particularly well) I shall have plenty of Italy yet. I bring out two volumes of new things ('Men and Women'), but under some other name to please the publisher."

To Siena still, and doubtless longingly enough, went the following; with its visible reflection, however, in spite of all longings, of the form already more or less taken by the writer's London life—a life henceforth of multiplied contacts and impressions, "social" activities.

Robert Browning to the Storys.

"London, 19 Warwick Crescent, Upper Westbourne Terrace, *July 17th*, 1863.

. . . "This scrap shall go to beloved Siena therefore, where I am better contented to fancy you than elsewhere. I cannot remember which the Belvedere villa is—tell me exactly. . .

This has been a busy season; I have gone out constantly, but not too much of my experiences stays in my head, except a general feeling of thankfulness and wonder at people's kindness. Lady William will be your first object of interest —very dear, and exceedingly clever, as well as admirably patient under her prolonged imprisonment. I much fear the summer is slipping away and will hardly find her prepared to make the effort of leaving home. Indeed she has not yet even left the house. The general health seems sadly affected by this vile indoor life. Still one sees little of this *late* of an evening, when visitors and their contribution of news bring out the old colour and quality—and you know how pleasant *that* is. Another invalid here is no less than A. Tennyson, who is kept in bed by an ambiguous sort of rash—supposed hay-fever and irregularly-acting vaccination; the learned don't know. I saw him and found him his fine self two days ago, affectionate and simple as ever. He has poems which will be printed soon; of one, 'Enoch' (the Fisherman or Sailor) friends speak highly. Ruskin is back from Switzerland, and well: I see him now and then, with Dickens, Ristori (I sat with her twice at dinner lately) and a few others you would care to know, and plenty you may guess.

. . . I could not go to Italy this summer, but next year I *must* go if I live. I confess I never think of seeing you again satisfactorily till the end of things here, till a few years more go by —and they *do* go like a dream. That it should be already two years, all but a few days, since I left Italy! I hope to end my life in the land I love best, and, what with work and troubles of great and little degree, five or six years will pass, if I don't pass them. So one day a very aged person will come knocking, &c., as in the story books. Who lives at the old villa, ours? And at Landor's and Orr's, if you are really not there? And the people—who is there dead or just the same? tell me, won't you? Last Sunday who came here but Annunziata? she is with Lady Duff Gordon. Remember—but I must have said this before—you cannot tell me the number of flies that buzz in your window without interesting me. I believe if you made mere crosses on the paper I could read the sheet full. Landor wrote yesterday; was very well. He has been ill, dangerously so, but seems likely to bear up against his eighty-nine years."

Browning continued, it will be seen, to give his friend his best service as negotiator, proof-reader, it may almost be said editor.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story.

"ATHENÆUM, *Nov.* 20*th*, 1863.

. . . "But to business, for Odo Russell goes to-morrow. I forwarded the parcel to Lansdowne House, at once, and I hope you know as much. I did the same by Lady Ashburton's on her return. And now listen. Chapman formally asked me to do what you shall hear. He said you had agreed to reduce the two vols. of 'Roba di Roma' to one for handbook use; that your abstractions were not sufficient, accompanied as they were by new matter, and that something more must be done to effect your purpose as well as his own. I at first refused decidedly, on the ground that you had pleased yourself, and I could not and would not cut away what you wished to leave. I bade him send me the proofs, however, which I engaged to correct thoroughly. He said somebody else must attempt it in consequence. When the first proofs arrived I bethought me, and made up my mind that you would be safer under my hand than any other's. I accordingly went through the whole book again and, with proper tenderness, have only touched a few corroborative passages which do not interfere with the text and may be supposed to answer the purpose of *notes*—so can be producible at any time in

another shape. There was no removing any of your own descriptions or remarks, but some of the historical notices of early times are not so immediately to the present purpose of the book and may be postponed—let us say. Thus in the paper on the Jews, while all the part relating to the mediæval and modern state of things is retained, some of the more recondite and preliminary matter is removed. Also, I much fear, the final note on the Population of Old Rome must be given up. I shall see, at the very end; but, according to the project, something must be sacrificed—the volume would otherwise be too bulky,—and I preferred, as I say, detaching what might be used separately hereafter to breaking up the pictures and discourses in the book which are in immediate request. At all events I have done my best, and certainly better—inasmuch as more liberally to my author—than the regular man-of-all-work would have done; but the task is an ungracious one, and I don't like it, though I like you to judge of it, for you will understand and forgive. To make amends, be sure that what is printed shall be flawless and perfect as care can make it. This much said, I will *go on*, the first day I can find, and write in my old way—not having time now for the many things."

This delicate business, the reducing and retouching of "Roba di Roma," meanwhile proceeds with a discretion and a harmony that are to the honour of both parties.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story.

"19 WARWICK CRESCENT, *Jan. 8th*, 1864.

. . . "I finished *last year* correcting the book. The delay in getting it out was none of mine, depend on it; but there is a good deal of new matter, beside corrections, and the printer would do it no quicklier. You may have got a copy by this, for aught I know. If the printers attended to my corrections all is right now. I am sure you will forgive me if anything may seem *over*corrected, in some trifling matters; but I wanted the book to be right—not merely blameless so far as my strict share in it goes. Thus I try at uniformity in the titles *Saint*, &c.; since we say St Augustine I say St Bernardine, not San—St Anne, not Sta. Anna, &c. Also when an English expression or word is referred to as original, if *that* is Latin I give it rather than Italian—equally a derivative—when this last would look like a blunder; *e.g.*, 'beaks of ships (*rostri*)' I changed to the real *rostra;* and so on. The book reads well throughout, and nothing is lost, you will see, except the early

history of the Jews. All the statistics are in —so good luck to it! Always, if you are satisfied with my doings, let me have the correcting your labours of this kind.

. . . "G. writes to me about that impossible Bust—it can only be from his little acquaintance with the procedures of art, especially your art. For a painter might give a few traits in full and leave the rest to one's fancy, but a sculptor must make a whole somehow, and for me at least the result would be 'the better the worse.' To strangers an idealisation might do very well. In the Tomb now constructing the central circle will contain no attempt at a portrait, much as I should desire it, but a simple 'Poetry,' with no pretence at anything but a symbol. G. thinks there would be help in the magnified reproduction of the photograph made at Hâvre; he does not remember that it is an ambrotype—beneath, or at the back, of glass — incapable of being reproduced, as a picture would be with a glass over it. Even the original is not in a state to be sent to Italy, having been cracked across the face in its passage thither—the least motion would divide it. I can quite believe that G., seeing what you can do,—'Saul' and 'Sappho,'—may hope that even this might be within your compass; but I know it will never

be, and I hate that you should even try vainly to do anything—and that, of all things. Understand me, dear Story! I shall write to G.; the first disappointment will be easier to bear than a later one. If you made a beautiful head which we could not bear to look on——! (Poor Thackeray! I was to have met him on Wednesday 23rd at dinner—we talked about his empty chair. He was to dine next day, 24th, at another friend's where I was certainly to see him, and where I heard, on arriving, what had happened in the morning.) He was no worse than I ever knew him; in higher spirits than of old; I often met him. He never got rid of his way of doing himself injustice by affecting—but never mind now. One has forgotten all about it. . . . Love to Mme. Du Quaire particularly. She writes great things of 'Sappho.'"

This next, though of a date of several months later, may find its place conveniently here.

W. W. Story to James Russell Lowell.

"Rome, *December 10th*, 1864.

"My dear James,—I was taken ill a month ago at Paris, and while I was lying on my bed E. read to me your delightful book of 'Fireside Travels,' which I was fortunate enough to pro-

cure from London. As she read it all the old days revived, all the old passages of love and hope and joy which we have known together came before me, and my heart yearned toward you as to one of the oldest and best loved of all my old friends. For years our correspondence has ceased—why I know not; but my affection has never wavered for a moment, and I've eagerly sought from all who had seen you news and information about you and yours. But as I read your book—so genial, so rich in humour and fancy—I seemed as it were to be again talking with you, and I determined, as soon as I should be well and have a half hour of unoccupied time, to write and break this long silence, and thank you for the kindly mention of me which is scattered through your book, and for the dedication of it to me. I hear that there is a sonnet or some verses prefixed to the American edition, but this I have not seen, as it is omitted in the English edition.

"How I wish you were again here as in the olden times, and that we again could wander about the streets of the city and through the mountain towns, or sit long evenings before the fire late into the night and talk as we used to do. There is one great drawback to me in my Roman life, and that is the want of some friend

with whom I can thoroughly sympathise and whom I can meet on the higher ranges of art and literature. For the most part, and with scarcely an exception among the American artists, art is (here) but a money-making trade, and I can have no sympathy with those who are artists merely to make their living. As for general culture there are none of our countrymen here who pretend to it, and I hunger and thirst after some one who might be to me as you were. But nobody makes good the place of old friends. We are knitted together with our youth as we never can be in our older age. . . . Has the wild love of travel gone out of your blood as it has out of mine? Are you growing respectable, solemn, professorial and dignified? I figure you to myself sometimes as sitting in the academic robes on the platform at Commencement, and cannot but smile as I see you there. Once in a while I hear your trumpet sound through the columns of the 'Atlantic' or the 'North American,' and more rarely I read some new poem. But why are the poems so rare? D not let the dust of the University drop too thickly upon you. Do not yoke Pegasus down into the professor's harness. You see I have not touched your hand and heard your voice for so long that I cannot do more than grope after you

in the dark, wondering about you and fearing and hoping, and getting perhaps everything wrong.

"This year I thought of going to America and seeing the old places again. But I hate to travel, and the expense, added to my dislike of worry, prevented me. Besides, I was not quite well in England, and loved better to lounge on the lawn at Mount Felix than to be tossed on the restless and roaring ocean—but it is just possible that next year I may brace myself up to this terrible voyage, and then I shall see you. If I do come I hope to bring with me some statue . . . to show as token of how I have spent my thoughts and my life here. At present there is nothing of mine in America of the best that I have done, and I should like that something *should* be there containing my best—which is nothing too good. I suppose as yet that nobody is convinced that there is much in me, and I fear that they are all right. They still pat me on the head and feebly encourage me now and then.

"Edith has grown up to be a woman, and so has Mabel. How I wish they could see each other and have the friendship their mothers had! But it has been ordered otherwise. Bobo you have seen; he is now ten years old and yesterday was his birthday. But Julian you

have never seen—who is going to be an artist, I think. I let him work out his own way. If the love of art is real it will domineer; if not real it is useless to foster it. . . . We live in the Barberini Palace and look down from our windows over all Rome, but there is not a person in any house so dear to us as you are."

But meanwhile, that summer, Story had received the following. The bust in question was his portrait, in marble, of Mrs Browning—not the least interesting feature of that collection of relics of both poets preserved during these latter years, in the Rezzonico Palace at Venice, the house in which Browning died. None, among Story's busts, has a greater appearance of delicate truth and tender characterisation.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story.

"19 WARWICK CRESCENT, *May 3rd*, 1864.

. . . "Of the Bust—I have told you: I could not but fear and be repugnant, for reasons as utterly removed from any suspicion of your power to do anything short of miraculous as one thing well can be from another. Miss Blagden and you both think a miracle *has* been done, and I believe in miracles, though I don't count upon them. I may easily be

morbid, and the Bust is not meant for *me*. That a beautiful work would come from the genius I always recognised is a very natural matter. One day I shall see—waiting hopefully meantime. . . . Let me bury these under the hopes of occupying any *ultimo piano* in Rome one day. What do you mean by talking about the ending of the lease in the P. Barberini? That you would ever, in any conceivable circumstances, leave Rome? I am not sure, however, that I might not incline to try the south, Naples or Sicily, when the railways overhaul Rome, as they seem likely to do. But don't let us think of that now. I do not call the week or whatever it may be which I suppose I shall have to spend in Florence a return to Italy, any more than Father Matthew called taking the sacrament wine-drinking. I shall send you my Poems when they appear—on the 21st. They have been delayed thus long to suit the requirements of Mr ——, who made such an offer as induced me to conquer my repugnance and let him print some of the things before publication. When he had got them safe he informed me that the money should be forthcoming—in better times! Suppose I had reversed the process, required the money *first*, and then announced that when my in-

vention was better I would remit the owing verses with five per cent interest, meanwhile praising extremely the quality of his cheque! But enough of him."

And I insert here, for general congruity, this last article of an interesting docket—undated, but belonging to the years immediately following the writer's return to England.

Robert Browning to Mrs Story.

"CAMBO, *près* BAYONNE, BASSES PYRÉNÉES [*no date*].

. . . "We had a fancy to try a new place, Arcachon by Bordeaux, and reached it in two days' easy journeying only to find what was a few years ago a beautiful pine-forest turned into a toy-town, with boulevards traced through the sand-hills, *tirs-au-pistolet*, a casino and other French institutions, and the whole full to the edge of strangers. There was nothing to be had, though I spent a couple of days in trying my luck. We looked at an adjoining old town of a different sort, La Teste (?)—nothing to let there; so we determined to go on to Bayonne, and did so, hoping for rest to the foot-sole at St-Jean-de-Luz. This is really an exquisite little place, with a delicious sea, and great mountains in the background; (but

with) every house taken, every *one* of not a few. Last we braved the awful Biarritz, but liked the noise and crowd of it still less than Arcachon. The prices moreover were calculated for diplomatists, ambitious senators and so on. There seemed no course open to us—pushed up at the very end of France as we were—but to lie by in some quiet place till the bathers should begin to leave St-Jean; they never stay long, in France, but come and go in a crowd. So here we are at Cambo, a village in the Pyrénées fifteen or sixteen miles from Bayonne, in repute for its mineral waters, but out of the season now, we thankfully find. The country is exceedingly beautiful, the mountains just like the Tuscan ranges, with plenty of oak and chestnut woods, and everywhere the greenest of meadows—the great characteristic of the place. The little fresh river that winds in and out of the hills and vales, the Nive, comes from Spain, which is three hours' walk off. This is the Basque country, moreover, the people talk French with difficulty, and charming girl-faces abound. There is no lack of necessaries, or even something over, and we have some fifty visitors—but after a few yards' striding one is alone to all intents and purposes.

"I went two days ago to see a famous moun-

tain-pass, *le pas de Roland*, so called because that paladin kicked a hole in a rock, which blocked the way, to allow Charlemagne's army to pass. Very striking and picturesque it was, while the meadows by the riverside were delightful. But it is strangely hot, in spite of the greenness, though this morning there is scirocco and approaching rain; the wind being so many puffs from a blast-furnace. Well, our plan is to stay here three weeks longer, till the 13th, and then spend the rest of our holiday at St-Jean—say three weeks, bathing assiduously to make up for lost time. There will be room and to spare, and we may recover our position; for the last two years in the dear rough old Ste. Marie, stark-naked as she was of all comfort to the British mind, put this smug little village in unpleasant relief. I don't see the sea all day long. On the other hand my sister, who never was so far south, is delighted with everything, for we have *cicale* and other unusualities. Moreover, there is a certain temptation which we *may* be unable to withstand—and if so, farewell to St-Jean. We are within an easy day's journey of Madrid, and P.'s ears prick up like unto one of these Spanish mule's at his mates on a hilltop. After all, one would sacrifice something for a sight of the Titians and Velasquez. Still, I hold

for my original scheme till forced to strike my flag. Be where we may we return to Paris in the first week of October, and if you are really to be found there how good it will be you know well enough. I shall content myself with saying that nobody used to the quantities of you which I can boast to have been could bear the miserable London allowance with such a superhuman equanimity as I think you appreciate in myself, in spite of a mock reproach or two. Now in earnest I am grieved to hear that Story has been ill; I suppose that the quiet days and perfect friendliness at Mount Felix would set all wrong right. You see you need to keep trimming the family boat, which doesn't make way unless every member of the crew is in his exact place, well and merry. Why should Story work and worry and spoil everything?"

Meanwhile, during the War, Story had heard at moments, characteristically and in spite of the stress of public affairs, from the friend at home most engaged in them.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"WASHINGTON, *May 1st*, 1863.

. . . "I heard of your brilliant success through public report and various articles. It

was great—just what my instinct always told me would be yours. Those two statues were victories, beautiful and noble. What next? I hear of 'Judith.' But what then? Do make in marble the record of our national regeneration, which is now at hand. Let that be your contribution.

"Already we feel most hopeful and confident. Perhaps there will be other reverses. I am not sure that Providence has given us all the chastisement needed for our case. Had we prevailed earlier we should have escaped from our sin too easily. More of expiation was required. But we shall throw it all off. Of this be sure. The Rebellion will be crushed, and Slavery too. If at any moment the way has seemed uncertain, it is so no longer. Our army is in admirable condition. But better than [an] army, at last we have a *policy*. . . . I wish I could talk with you while we sipped the white wine of Rome. It would be refreshing to have a day of art. But I am at work always. At home I look upon my few marbles and bronzes, and wish I had more; but here in Washington there is nothing; . . . But you are angry. Perhaps you will not write. Then let Emelyn. She cannot be angry. But I must hear from you. The temporal power

seems to hold like Slavery. Prince Napoleon told me when he was here that he gave it six months longer. That was all. His prophecy was like some of those to which we are accustomed."

And the following is not less expressive of the man, the time, all the feelings of the hour.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"WASHINGTON, *Jan.* 1*st*, 1864.

. . . "Of course I watch your ascending glory. Nobody followed with intenser interest your English success; and now I am preparing for something grander; for George Russell tells me that your 'Saul' is 'the finest statue he ever saw.' Good! It made me happy and proud to hear this. When will it be in marble? And where will it go? But don't become impatient with us here. The time will come when all that you have done will be recognised. I wish it were at once. But I know something of hope deferred. . . . You will be happy to know that the fate of Slavery is settled. This will be a free country. Be its sculptor. Give us, give mankind, a work which will typify or commemorate a redeemed nation. You are the artist for this immortal achievement. . . . Eng-

land will yet regret every act or word of her *semi*-alliance with Slavery. The Rebellion, you know, is nothing but *Slavery in arms*. That concession of Belligerency to *Slavery in arms* was insufferably wicked. Pardon me; I cannot help it. Longfellow's son had a ball enter under one shoulder, traverse the body and come out under the other. It was from an English rifle—typical!"

To which this, again, may serve as a sequel.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"Boston, *Aug. 9th*, 1864.

"I have just returned from a week with Longfellow in your Nahant home, where I was installed in your room. The air, the breeze, the sea, were kindly. I sat on the piazza much of the time when I was not asleep. There I read, or rather *we* read, the new volume of Tennyson and enjoyed it more than air or breeze or sun. Is it not exquisite? But answer me this question. How can a country which produces such fruit, send forth such doctrines and sympathies as it shows now with regard to belligerent Slavery? Tell me. You are there and can ascertain. I have never felt the supremacy of Tennyson more than now

when I feel how low down our England—dear old England—has gone. . . . Pray, try to fashion and carve the English mind into its old beauty; awaken its earlier sympathies with freedom and justice; tell Englishmen that their country has fallen into a moral insensibility different and yet kindred to that when Charles II. ruled. I cannot see it otherwise. Sad enough, but so it is. I imagine you anxious at the tidings of each packet. Have faith. This republic is a lifeboat which cannot be sunk. Grant assures the President that he shall take Richmond. He delays now to avoid effusion of blood. Sherman is a consummate commander, whose march has shown the greatest military faculties. Have faith."

This was clearly a delightful correspondent to hear from. Sumner remained to the end the same generous friend who, years before, in a letter I have not cited, had written to Story: "I marvel at your work on the law, and I wish I could go to Europe with you." His friendship embraced and comprehended, as friendship in every case should.

Charles Sumner to W. W. Story.

"Boston, *Oct. 8th*, 1864.

"I know not which I enjoyed most, the poem of Leonardo in 'Blackwood' or the criticism on English neutrality in the 'Daily News.' I doubt if anybody has ever lived before who could have produced those *two* things, which testify to equal eminence in jurisprudence, art and poetry. I took 'Blackwood' to the 'Transcript,' and Whipple was so inspired by the poem that he printed it, although war and politics exclude everything else now. I have asked Denis to see that the article is printed in a pamphlet here. It ought to be in England and a copy sent to M.P.'s generally. Will not Americans, and Englishmen who love peace and justice, see that this is done? You have done a patriotic service, and I am anxious that its influence should be extended. I cannot think of England without a pang. Her true course was as plain as a turnpike. Indeed she had marked it out by her previous policy for more than a generation. She should have had nothing to do with the support of belligerent Slavery. It was her *Concordat* with this monster that disturbed me. I felt that all who loved her best ought to protest and to cry out. Private relations were nothing by the side of public duty. . . . I

should not be surprised if the next Christmas saw us very near peace and with gold at par. The opening of the cotton-trade will tell everywhere, but nowhere more than in London. Don't draw from America if you can help it. Live on Europe as long as you can. But does not Europe rejoice to support you? I am disgusted with the delays about the statue of Quincy. . . . Among visitors here are the Auguste Laugels — much liked. He has held the pen for us bravely. I wish you were minister at Rome. I have always said you ought to be, but Seward keeps that place as a sort of 'preserve' for himself and friends. But General King is a most amiable gentleman."

And of *this* interesting docket there are a few final words which, though of two years later date, I give here for their appreciative ring. The memorial referred to in the second place was not to become a reality till, after Story's death, Augustus Saint-Gaudens brought to its slow completion the monument now erected, on the edge of Boston Common, opposite the State House, to Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, who, commanding the first regiment of coloured troops raised in the North, fell in the assault on Fort Wagner, in South Carolina. "I wish," Sumner

writes, "you might make a statue of Lincoln. He is an historic character worthy of bronze and marble. I do not give up the Shaw Statue. In my absence there was an indescribable torpor of the committee. But [illegible] says it shall be done; and I say so too. . . . I sorrow for Seward, who seems to be more than usually perverse. But he lost his head when he lost the nomination at Chicago, and has done nothing but blunder since. He never understood our war, and now does not understand how peace is to be secured."

IX.

ENGLAND AND SOCIETY.

It was, as I have mentioned, during the years immediatedly following Story's first artistic "success" in London that his English visits, friendships, familiarities of every cordial kind, most increased and multiplied, nourished as they moreover were by frequent Roman opportunities, points of contact with the English colony abroad, comings and goings of old acquaintances and "introduced" travellers. Both his reputation and his activity continued to grow, and the twelve or fifteen years from 1862 were doubtless in all sorts of ways the happiest of his life. He liked the "world," and the world also thoroughly liked him; he was not the artist to whom solitary brooding is a need or a luxury; concentration he arrived at (with the artist's usual struggle) during the fresh, the early hours of the insidious Roman day; but on the basis of that common and consecrated triumph there

were doubtless few things of more relish for him than his easy hospitality and, as may be frankly said, his personal success. Talk was his joy and pleasantry his habit—to all of which the human, the social panorama constantly, richly ministered. Living in a large circle—for during all the brightest years it grew and grew—he carried about with him, in every direction, his handsome, charming face, his high animation, his gaiety, jocosity, mimicry, and, even more than these things, his interest in ideas, in people, in everything—his vivacity of question, answer, demonstration, disputation. In England at least he was still in time for the "good" years, the period during which, in society, it was possible to be yet a while longer unconscious of the emphasised rule of the mob. He may have heard the growl of the rising tide, the roar of the flooding waters, but it is our fancy — though perhaps but the fond fancy *any* later generation is apt to cherish—that if the menace was then near enough for vigilance (which indeed, within the circle, would have added a zest) it was not quite near enough for alarm. We make our landmarks, we find support in our dates, so far at least as we are musingly retrospective, or as we try to be finely observant; and we thus settle upon the dread year of the Franco-German War

as—for the chronicler with a sense of shades—the hitherward limit of the *liveable* era, the age that had not wholly thrown up the sponge of Selection. In some such pleasant world as must have been formed by some such principle as that, I like, in imagination, at all events, to see our friends launched, and I only regret that in respect to these liveliest middle years I find few letters or journals at hand.

This is a proof, no doubt, that life itself was more exacting; but in the absence of documentary detail Story's English summers and autumns, which became, for some years, customary and regular, are in danger of showing mainly as a list of persons and "places," an array of celebrated names, country visits and other social occasions. He had other things to do, in these years, than keep records; his artistic production was constant and profuse, and there were complications enough connected with an existence carried on partly in Rome and partly, as his children grew older, beyond the Alps and the Channel, in the land of preferred schools and universities, preferred sport, preferred interest as to many of the deeper connections. He was to send his two sons, in due course, to Eton and to Oxford; he was to introduce his daughter, with every auspicious omen, to English society;

he was to feel, for himself, the attraction of English sport and to take for several seasons a Cumberland shooting-haunt, Crosby Lodge, near Carlisle—which I come, amid the contents of my box, upon faded photographs of, yellowing mementoes that have their share of that particular sweetness, particular sadness, defying notation, that attaches to grouped families, happy clustered house-parties, seen in their *other* years, other aspects, fashions, combinations, so often seemingly impossible, against a background of ivied friendly walls, old gardens or woods. It is to this period and the immediately following that his numerous invitations to commemorate eminent Americans belong—the monuments, in especial, of Edward Everett in the public garden at Boston, the Chief-Justice Marshall for the United States Supreme Court, the Joseph Henry for the American Institute of Science, the President Quincy for Harvard University, the Colonel Prescott, to stand in the shadow of the great bleak obelisk at Bunker's Hill, the George Peabody, to sit in bronze, as we have noted, in that of the London Royal Exchange. Some of these things I have not seen in position; but of those of which this is the case the impression, I find, has fixed itself; notably that of the Boston bronze of Everett

the orator, so happily conceived both as a portrait of the man and as a presentment of the speaker. Complete indeed, in this statue, is the fusion of the speaker and the man, so that it is, quite characteristically, the latter who stands there for ever, in presence of a benched and hushed posterity, throwing back his fine, cold head, raising high his practised arm, maintaining his lofty level and rounding his admirable period. No monumental portrait, as I remember this one, could characterise more closely while remaining conscious of the need to generalise nobly.

Hand in hand with this work for public uses—fertile, always, for artists, from Michael Angelo down, in frustrations of idea, in the inexorable element of compromise, in worries of every sort—went the frequent production of portrait-busts, now valued private possessions, and went also, above all, the multiplication of those studies of legendary, poetic, symbolic character, to the imposing array of which each year, for a long time, added a figure, so that they were to become, as ingenious personifications and embodied ideas, the leading note of the sculptor's talent and the supplementary affirmation of the poet's. They are dispersed to-day over many cities—the Saul and the Sardanapalus, the

Semiramis and the Judith, the Alcestis, the Medea, the Delilah, the panting, resting daughter of Herodias, the tenderly-brooding Electra, the grandly tragic Jerusalem Desolate, the so simple and striking Nemesis, watching, under her hood, with hidden and as if fumbling hands; London and Paris, Washington, New York, Boston, Philadelphia have them to show either as ornaments of ample habitations or as gifts and bequests to open collections. Deep and living, in Story, was the sense of the grace of women, at its finest; which never took on, with him, moreover, the least hint of affectation or of "manner," in spite of its inclining, inevitably, given his romanticism, to modern types —in spite especially of his being so haunted with the American, in its delicacy, that we feel how quickly, in his studio, without other light, we should guess the land of his birth. I have already mentioned how this spacious reliquary, where everything that came from his hands exists in repeated form, offers to-day, quite in the image of the silent workshops of the Canovas, Teneranis, Thorwaldsens, places of elder pilgrimage, the close record of his persistent unfolding. It is pre-eminently the history of a worker, of a man who, whether in felicity or in frustration, required of himself all he had to give.

He was never, meanwhile, at any time, free from the literary obsession. Restless, as I have more than once noted, was his literary, in especial his poetic, curiosity; subject to easiest provocation in fact his love of knowledge in any direction, various illustrations of which we shall presently meet. Story's passion, however, was predominantly for the poetic mystery, which he kept constantly sounding and exploring for his personal satisfaction, as might be said—while offering to the public, that is, a comparatively small quantity of the verse that he, almost uncontrollably, distilled. It was drawn from him, the total quantity, by every emotion and impression, by almost any occasion or any accident; there can have been no free hour, no aspect presented or renewed, under suggestion of which he was not thus all unpretentiously improvising. Fairly curious the case, in presence of the gathered evidence, and fairly enviable, above all, the easy play of the gift. In few poets not of the first felicity can the love of the lyric, and scarce less of the dramatic, idea so have worked, and we remain rather puzzled by the failure of the love to cover the whole precarious ground. Story's poetry is prompt and sincere, and has often the happiest moments; yet we feel it not to

move *passibus æquis* with his lively interest in his medium. Of any such treachery, at the same time, he would doubtless himself never have complained. He treated his muse as a consoler, cheerer, beguiler, and would honestly have said, beyond question, that she had done enough for him in letting him live with her. To have had such a connection to cultivate had assuredly been for him, from the first, a partial provision for happiness.

But in making these points I brush by my dates perhaps too fast, and I retrace the way a moment to pick up a letter that I may not omit.

W. W. Story to T. G. Appleton.

"Mount Felix, *Oct.* 1*st*, 1862.

. . . "I thank you most sincerely for all the very kind words you say about my statues. They have had a success here far above their merits, but it none the less has been most grateful to me. Yes, I am really glad not to be called an amateur any longer, and patted on the head and patronised (in words, not in commissions) by my countrymen. . . . We have been greatly enjoying our summer in England, and though I find the sympathies of all Englishmen completely in favour of the South, yet I

am personally treated with the greatest kindness and courtesy, and all my arguments are listened to with consideration. I flatter myself that I have made some little impression sometimes, but it is impossible to clear up the English mind on the subject of the War. There is the greatest ignorance and the greatest prejudice. The Englishman knows no logic but that of facts, has little perception of principles, no notion of what a written constitution is, and gets into such an inextricable muddle between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States that I at last am always obliged to give up the task of enlightening him as hopeless. But nothing can exceed their personal kindness to me, and I can never forget it. . . . I hear sometimes from Motley at Vienna. He is terribly excited about American affairs—too much so, as everybody reports. H. writes that he is more violent than a diplomatist 'doit être ou au moins paraître.' Adams I see sometimes—he is doing admirably; cool to coldness, never losing his temper, and giving back as hard blows as he gets when necessity demands. Montalembert expressed himself to me the other night as deeply sympathising with the North, and said it was amazing to him to hear the opinions

expressed in England in favour of the South. Do you know Montalembert? He is most agreeable. You see I keep getting back into this question. . . . We have just returned from a series of visits in the north which were delightful. Next week we pass at Lord Lansdowne's, and afterwards go to the Ashburtons, Cranworths and Wensleydales—if we can make time. But we are anxious to get back to Rome. The Roman question is in a state of ferment, but I do not see any strong indication that Louis Napoleon means to withdraw his troops. Nothing will force him to this but a shot on the Boulevard. Russell and Julia Sturgis are the same as ever—both as handsome and as kind as they can be."

On the close of the war, during the summer of 1865, Story returned to America, with his wife, for a few weeks—for light on which brief visit I avail myself of the latter's frank and interesting communications. Our friends looked at things, on this occasion, inevitably, with a fresh eye—that is, with an eye now accustomed, in many respects, to other conditions and appearances; they became aware, as repatriated Americans of the earlier time seldom escaped doing, of a change in the value, proportion,

dignity, decency, interest, whatever it might be called, of objects and aspects once agreeably, once innocently enough familiar to them. These perceived differences furnished, precisely, in general, some of its liveliest passages to the drama of repatriation. The drama, it must be added, was well advised, for the most part, not to be too publicly played, and the liveliness I speak of was perhaps the greater for finding itself not a little compressed and curtained. The echo of it here was, be it remembered, altogether confidential. The need for precautions, in the case, has, however, long since vanished, if only because of the difference, to-day, in many of the facts themselves. Any such present impression of them would, doubtless, at a hundred points, utter itself in a different voice; the fresh eye would in fact probably need, quite urgently, all its freshness.

Mrs Story to her Daughter.

"Boston, *July 24th*, 1865.

. . . "I have never yet taken a step out of doors, though I often drive with friends in the lovely environs of Boston. We went to the Commencement exercises at Cambridge, where great was our disappointment over the general shabbiness and seediness of the procession. Tell

[Mrs Russell Sturgis] that in memory of the glorified past she should never lift this veil and behold the actual fact. It is too dreary. Fancy the musty old professors dressed not in the academic robe of former days, but according to the caprice of individual New England taste, than which nothing is more eccentric. Consider the motley group upon the stage, some dressed in light tweeds, others in linen sacks, with straw hats and boots uncleaned. . . . All this in a whitewashed church, to the sound of Latin verse and classical quotations. We met many an old friend there, and it went straight to my heart to see papa walking arm-in-arm with James Lowell. But the day of days at Harvard was that of 'Commemoration,' two days later, when all the world of mutual admiration, with many an outsider, were convened to talk over the War, its heroes and victories, deciding, as it seemed to me, that the State of Massachusetts had fought all the battles and raised all the money and troops. I never heard such a crowing as there was, and though I quite agree that Massachusetts *has* distinguished herself beyond the rest and come out of the struggle with the fairest record, yet I can admit some virtue in the sister States, some laurels for other sons than those of Harvard. It was a charming

scene and full of interest to us. I wish you had been with us, and as Emerson's well-remembered tones fell upon my ear I found it hard to be comforted for your absence. I should so much have liked you to hear my old favourite. There too James Lowell read a very fine poem, full of spirit and pathos. I met so many old friends and acquaintances that I was entirely beleaguered by the cloud of old associations that they recalled. My long-dead past seemed actually to live again. Papa has not yet decided as to whether he will make the Everett statue. If they agree to his views about position, material, &c., I think it probable that he will undertake it. Miss Stebbins's statue of Horace Mann has been received by the populace very unfavourably and is everywhere denounced. In fact, it is the very worst thing I ever saw. We dined with the Wilds and met there S. C. and John Field—it savoured of the Siena days. I enclose a list of papa's wine left from his father's cellar. If [Russell Sturgis] would like any, let him say so and it shall be freely his."

To all of which I may add that a single name, in these last lines, touches the train of association and causes the shades again to hover. John Field, of Philadelphia, of Newport, of

Washington, of London, of Paris, of twenty places beside, John Field, the personally valued friend of our friends and, again, of numbers of *their* friends, of more people elsewhere, everywhere, than I can pretend to indicate, has already hovered for us to the extent of a glimpse afforded by one of Lowell's letters. He had ridden with the latter (to whom he remained long devoted, even through anxious Madrid days,) with Black and Charles Eliot Norton up and down the still primitive Sicily, and the small mild memory of a brief hour of which he was the centre obtrudes itself on me, here, too irresistibly either to suffer contradiction or to need apology. The Storys were to go, shortly after the despatch of the above, to Newport—the Newport of the ancient days and of more of those sweet old impressions, long since bedimmed by change, than can, at this time of day, be reproduced or reckoned, and my innocent anecdote refers itself, visibly, to the short interval before they had come. It refers itself to a hot summer night, of that (again) irreproducible quality of the Newport evenings of other years,—evenings when, after closely-peopled hours of talk, of movement, of idleness, through which the light of blue seas, yellow sands, pearl-grey lichened rocks, lily-sheeted inland ponds and daily intensities and lustres of

sunset seemed breezily to play, the air was filled with something soft and multitudinous that might have been all at once the murmur of stirred shrubberies, the waft, from wide, glowing windows, of dance-music and song, the latter in especial, the high, brilliant notes of women's art—the general presence, above all, of clustered gossiping groups on vague verandahs, where laughter was clear and the "note" of white dresses, waistcoats, trousers, cool. Of the company on the vague verandah of *my* reminiscence no other member remains, not one of the kindly intimates who listened to John Field's recital of the scene described, less indulgently, in Mrs Story's letter —listened with interest enough, yet interest doubtless in no case greater than that of the youngest of the party, who sat on the steps of the porch where the shade of evening was thickest, and who wanted to ask more questions than his modesty, his juniority, allowed. Not yet perhaps had the sense been so sharp in him that his seniors never asked enough, or not at least the right ones, the particular ones *he* desired.

The day — it must have been the previous day, or even the one before that—had been, in Boston and at its Cambridge suburb, of maximum heat, and the talker, coming back

from it, acknowledged the refreshment, the benediction of Newport—all of which conveyed something of the high historic pitch, the patriotic and poetic temperature of the other scene. A wealth of eloquence and cheer had attended the Harvard celebration of the return of Peace, at which our friend had gone up to be present, but the climax had been Lowell's delivery of his noble Commemoration Ode, as to which one now sees—as to which one even then perhaps mutely, mystically made out — that a great thing that was to live had been but half-notedly born. The occasion, I daresay, might actually figure, had we time to extract the moral, as a convenient measure of the way in which great things with a future *are*, for the most part, born. The future of this one (which was heard of, naturally, with all interest) sat there unseen and unfelt with us, or very nearly; and yet it is now the one member of the party particularly alive. That, however, is not the moral of my reminiscence — and all the less that a moral was what, in the course of the talk, especially disengaged itself. *This* element, for our reporter, had been that he had spent his day with William and Emelyn Story, whom it had been a joy to see again, and who were still wonderful (even to putting every one else

present to shame) for youth and good looks. The lesson was none other, accordingly, than the dear old lesson, once more, that "Europe," bless its dear old name, was the real *fontaine de Jouvence*, the true and sovereign preserver. Such was the appearance presented by those who had been happily able to keep drinking at the spring. We had all drunk as we could, and the taste was still on our lips; only we had had, unlike the Storys, to snatch our lips away. I remember, after long years, how, in the charitable gloom, which veiled, from each of us to each, the fierce American ravage, we sighingly acknowledged our loss. I hear again the good John Field—I am conscious again of the response. "I told them how Europe had kept them—" and then the resigned unanimity of the "So *we* might have been kept—!" But there was only one of us for whom it was not perhaps already too late.

W. W. Story to his Daughter.

"Newport, *Summer of* 1865.

. . . "Mrs Robert Sturgis had a little dance, and we stood round on the edges and were probably a lot in the way. I didn't see a handsome face there — all wan and worn and haggard. There was a famous Miss ——, Jewish

in style, hollow-cheeked, with two drumsticks for arms, broken and sharpened off at the elbows. To her immense attention was paid, because she is very rich. All the talk here is about dollars, how much money this and that one has got, and a dreary and monotonous thing is it to hear it so constantly. The girls are excited in their style, and do not articulate half their words. . . . Mrs —— —— was by far the prettiest woman in the room, but pert as usual, and not successful in imitating J. S. I am writing while everybody is talking, and Wild has just immensely amused us by a story about Edward Everett, which I will tell you. He was going 'down east,' a short time before his death, and as usual the train was crowded and there were more people than seats. Mr Everett then kindly took on his knee a little girl and carried her thus for a considerable distance. When the child came to a station where she was to stop she rose, and her benefactor said as she was leaving him: 'Perhaps you would like to know, my little girl, who has been holding you on his knee all this time. It is the Hon. Edward Everett.' To which the little girl answered ingenuously and interrogatively: 'Salem man, sir?'

. . . "Newport is all shingle and clapboard,

with a lot of pretentious wooden houses each on its little acre, or half-acre, of land, and subject each to the supervision of at least one neighbour. There is no such thing as privacy, and nobody seems to desire it. The great thing is to drive every day up and down the Avenue, as it is called, which is a loose line of wooden cottages with board ornamentation, or to bathe from the beach or to go on Saturday evening to the 'Ocean House' to dance. The air is scirocco cooled off by the sea. Yesterday we went out on a yachting party — Commodore Stevens's yacht, *The Maria*—and had a charming sail in the bay. . . . There were two young — girls, one-inch-one in the waist and half-an-inch in the arms, and rather attractive notwithstanding! In the evening, at the Ocean House, we were greatly amused. There was a great crowd, coming from everywhere, and among them some very pretty persons. The band played, and the great hall was crowded with dancers. People came in from the cottages —girls, old men, servants and shopkeepers mixed together, and yet there was nothing disagreeable in the manners of any of them—all were decorous and pleasant. I have scarcely seen a mutilated man—there was not one last night;

and another thing that has surprised me is the entire absence of soldiers in the streets. Here and there you see an officer, but no soldiers. It is scarcely possible to believe that we have just finished a long and terrible war. Nobody thinks about it, nobody talks about it. In fact, one hears it more spoken of in one day in Europe than in a month here. Everything looks prosperous, nobody is depressed in spirits or in hope. Shoddy and petroleum have raised their heads very high, but money is not an aristocracy and cannot make one in a day. People begin to affect being poor as dividing them at once from such sources of wealth."

The above, as descriptive of Newport architecture and Newport roads, becomes, in the light of social and material revolutions, a bit of very ancient history. The first allusion in the following, it may be added, is to a "cottage" that had belonged, on the cool Massachusetts promontory,[1] to Story's parents and his childhood and youth. "Aunt Julia" is Mrs Russell Sturgis, younger than Story, and affectionately invoked in that beneficent character by his children.

[1] Nahant.

W. W. Story to his Daughter.

"Beverly, Mass., *July 30th*, 1865.

. . . "Very pleasant indeed it was to see the old places and the old faces and to hear the old voices. Some of the beards—shall I say all? —were greyer; but there was the old ring of the voice. Longfellow is aged very much and wears a grey beard and long hair. He and Tom Appleton are in *our* old cottage, which is entirely unaltered in every respect; the same old papers on the walls, the same plates on the table, the same chairs and furniture, and one old tea-caddy with all our names on it, beginning with Russell Sturgis and Julia Boit, and now ending with Edith Longfellow. It was the flowery-pekoe tea-caddy, which is now, I am sorry to say, quite empty. We had Chowder at dinner, tell Aunt Julia, and it was stupendous. . . . They were all as kind as could be, and old Mrs Cary was as peaceful and full of repose as if she had never lived in America. The old hotel is but a mass of ruins, and it was mournful to see them. It was in those old walls that I first saw Aunt Julia—and I didn't call her aunt then. . . . We go driving about in a sort of toy carriages, which are so slight that I expect each moment to be smashed. The roads are outrageous and everywhere cut up

with the rails of the horse-cars. These horse-cars are the pest of the country, but you must take them or walk, unless you choose to pay a fortune away in carriages. There are no such conveniences as cabs. The first day I arrived in Boston I saw framed in the inside of a horse-car an advertisement of 'Reversible Food' and one of 'Overstrung Pianos.' I had seen enough reversible food on shipboard to derive any pleasure from the idea of it; but the Overstrung Piano struck me as thoroughly American. Isn't everything here overstrung?"

If I find myself, amid the play of allusion, in the presence of names delicately spectral, divided between the desire not to pass without some grace of recognition, and the desire, on the other hand, to spare even spectral sensibility, in what case could I more justly hesitate than in the connection indicated (all for acknowledgment of kindness shown) by the second sentence of the following? Yet a word of greeting is, for us, at any moment but the laying of a flower on a grave. Even had she not come a little too late for the pioneer-time Miss Weston would have been, for a precursor, already too formed, too initiated and, as it were, too decorative. She was a person to

arrive, in her gentleness, when the road was made and the service organised. She was a person also to remind us that one of the main effects of such a retrospect as this is to illustrate, for our perception, on the part of the general company, some of the finest, even if strangest, possibilities of union and fusion. There positively existed, among our vanished cosmopolites, combinations of elements, practical mixtures and harmonies, that were not to have been expected. That the tone of New England "at its best" should melt into the tradition of France at *its* best and that the result should be something consistent and exquisite, was, for example, a charming surprise—the simple recall of which may serve as our salutation. And shall I offer another to Alleyne Otis, a figure, almost *the* figure, for supreme sophistication—a rudimentary shade of it—of the old Newport days? If I should hesitate here it would be for fear of going too far. Yet we owe something, always, to those who, at the time of our freshness, were revelations, for us, of type, who rendered to our development the service of fitting images to names that were otherwise but as loose labels. Newport, somehow, even for young observation, was not Thackerayan, but the figure and face, the attitude and approach

and address of Alleyne Otis unmistakably were. He "did" nothing—he only *was:* which, in the antediluvian America, was always a note of character, always argued some intensity. He persisted in survival, in idleness, in courtesy, in gallantry, and yet, even though gallant, persisted also, it seemed, in mystery, in independence of apparel, above all in an imputed economy that was his finishing mark and that indicated real resources. Given his "social position" he was the more Thackerayan for this eccentric thrift, which was a touch, for the *personage*, almost recalling Balzac or Saint-Simon, some master of literary portraiture. Was he not, *au besoin*, nobly impertinent, latently insolent?—which is what *they* would infallibly have made him. I cannot make him as well as they, but I do, as I cast about me, what I can. The particular resources I allude to were wanting, if he lacked them, to his perfection. But I have already gone too far.

Mrs Story to her Daughter.

"Newport, *Aug.* 8*th*, 1865.

. . . "My heart aches for the poor Van de Weyers—what a terrible thing! Emma Weston has written to ask us to stay with her; they are full of anxious sympathy for the Van de

Weyers. We arrived here last night, meeting John Field at the train. We were behind our time by one train, and so missed a bevy of friends who had gone to the terminus to meet us. The Turner Sargeants were there among others to take us home in their carriage. We find it most pleasant and charming here. James Lowell, here for the day, came to breakfast with us. He is just as loveable and cordial as ever, and as I write he sits joking and chatting with papa after the old fashion so delightful to me to hear. I feel as if I were in a dream; the past is so vividly brought before me. Tell [Mrs Russell Sturgis] that Alleyne Otis still disports himself and does the old beau."

The American visit, however, was a brief parenthesis, and the rich-coloured Roman life, interrupted only for the summer and the autumn, continued, with its happy activities and relations, to account, almost monotonously, for Story's maturer years. The general serenity of his career would give indeed small advantage to the biographer. Misfortune may be detailed or analysed, but happiness eludes us more, and Story was as happy as a man could be who was doing, on the whole, what he liked, what he loved, and of whom the gods had

shown jealousy but on the one cruel occasion of the death of his eldest boy. As the world was interesting to him, so likewise the world was kind; he rejoiced in his near relationships, which cost him no second pang. The difficulty is, in any case, that our privilege of evocation rather shrinks as the years float us on. The procession of friends and guests thickens, but there are fewer we can take by the sleeve. One of the most valued, fortunately, is commemorated for me, on the occasion of her death, by Mrs Story's hand—in addition to which I find in an old heterogeneous scrap-book the interesting article contributed to "The Morning Post," at the same moment, by Mrs Grote. I can well remember that in the early years of a long residence (that was to be) in London, a good deal of light was thrown for me — as it has always had to be thrown for the stranger acquainted with other capitals—on the habit, rooted in English society and less exceptional now than then, of receiving in the evening only by invitation. It was explained that in the annals of comparatively modern London but a single person had proved it possible to be successfully "at home" on other than designated and published occasions. Lady William Russell had achieved this feat, which had re-

mained, for all the world, a monument to her powers. During the later years of her life, which had begun in a distant and magnificent era, she had never, summer or winter, quitted her house, and yet had never found herself alone. The aspect thus presented was impressive to the inquirer—especially in the pleasant light of nearer approach to the circle of the wondrous lady. There are no such figures in the world (so far as it is a world of conversation) as those of the interesting women who have only to sit still to find themselves a centre of life; and the very places in which they sit, the constituted scene of the spell, seldom fail to make for the student of manners an attaching, an inspiring picture. In this case the scene, with many of its features, is still more or less to be identified. It had a dim but a rich historic background, that of a youth spent almost amid the clash of Napoleonic arms — quite, at all events, amid the glitter of ancient allied Courts, to the tune of what was to become Lady William's legend, the glory of her having, in Paris, at the Restoration, among the gathered sovereigns, been able to flirt with each potentate in his own language. The Storys had entertained, from early Roman days, a lively sympathy for her second son.

"As we had a great friend in Lord Odo, he made us acquainted with his mother as soon as she arrived in Rome, and from that moment grew up one of the most intimate and interesting friendships of our life. Lady William was full of all good things, heart and head. I learnt from her much of the philosophy of life, and her lessons are never forgotten. Full of gifts, accomplishments and knowledge, she was yet wholly without pedantry, and was extraordinarily wise about the world without being at all *of* it. Her ideas and feelings were all noble. After her carriage-accident in Rome, by which her leg was broken, I sat by her bedside during long visits, for she could even then talk and carry me back to old and wonderful days. She had been for years, abroad and in England, at Court and at home, the centre of everything that was distinguished and wise and witty. The devotion of her sons, especially of her best-beloved Odo, was perfect; Odo ministered to her wants with the tenderness of a woman, watched her and took care of her as if she had been his child. Her own care of the three, and of their education, had been beyond praise; they had been her sole companions during her widowhood; she had studied with them and for them, taught them Latin and Greek and everything

she had learned or *could* learn. She was a linguist of the first order, so that when one listened to her different facilities one scarcely knew which to think the greatest. An old-fashioned disciplinarian as to manners and customs, she (while their intimate and best friend) exacted from her boys the utmost consideration and deference; often, when they were young, keeping them standing in her presence and sometimes obliging them to have their hats off even when driving with her. By whatever means employed, she had absolutely gained their confidence and devotion; it was a relation unlike any I have seen in other sons. Often, at this time, when I left her bedside, I walked back to Palazzo B. with the Duke of Sermoneta, who was then at the height of his cleverness and brilliancy, a particularly witty talker. We were thus brought so much together and so associated with Lady William that, long after, when he married again, he brought me all the letters she had ever written him (a large collection) and formally gave them to me to be kept with mine, suggesting for them a motto from Virgil.

"When at last she was well enough to make the journey we left Rome together for England, and she was carried all the long way in her

own carriage, which, with her devoted maid and Odo in constant attendance, was placed on the railway-trains and the deck of the steamer. Lord Loughborough joined us on the way, and our party became a large one (the latter reading us his verses when, at night, we couldn't sleep!), but we all saw her from time to time. She bore the journey extraordinarily, and we were together in Paris for some days; then we preceded her to London and saw her again, a little later, in Audley Square. We found, at this time, that, thinking, as she had already often done, of what she could do for us, she had written to various friends asking them to be good to us. Thus, without delivering a single letter of introduction, we found ourselves warmly welcomed by her family and hosts of her friends. It was to her original kindness that we owed what was most pleasant, from the first, in our London periods, and I remember how, late every evening, when the full day was over, I went to open the budget of our impressions to her, and found her always amused and interested and sympathetic. Her own comments and judgments, her remarks on people and things she knew so much better than I, were immensely to the point and often the most trenchant imaginable. When I made a new and apparently

agreeable acquaintance I went to her for light and information as to character and antecedents, and never found her the least at a loss. She knew about everything and every one, circumstances, history, family, root and branch. Her faithful German maid, Mati, librarian, companion almost, and housekeeper in one, was a feature of much interest in the household and was treated with great affection. To her Lady William would apply for a book, old or new, and no matter in what tongue, and it always appeared without delay. A certain, a very considerable, number of cats of low degree were given harbour as the pets of Mati, and, though they were by no means pets of her mistress, it would never have done for even the dearest friend to speak of them to Lady William as objectionable. If, however, she could bear the cats to please her maid, she couldn't bear bores to please any one, and, constantly repeating that life was too short for them, declined to receive them on any terms. Her doorkeepers had been taught very carefully to sift for her, and mistakes in this respect were very seldom made.

"She had more than once spoken to me of her having lately embraced the Catholic faith. Her earliest religious impressions had come to her at Vienna, where her father was English Am-

bassador. She was left almost entirely to the guidance of a French governess, who, as a strong Catholic, carried her at the most impressionable age to the ceremonies of that Church, which produced a deep effect on her young mind. The impressions then received revived in after years and sustained and consoled her under the stress of sorrow and illness. She was at the same time never narrow or violent in her faith, and when once Mrs H., in her presence, began to use arguments to convert *me*, Lady William reproved her and said 'Don't meddle with her beliefs; they are what she needs — probably better than any you can supply.' Again, at a time when she was really ill, and I was with her, and a Monsignore was announced, she wrote on a slip of her queer paper and handed it to me: 'Tell them not to let him come in. I will *not* see him.' No such 'good' Catholic could have been, in short, more easy — which converts so rarely are; and she was buried not in Catholic ground, but at Chenies with her husband's folk."

We wander here still among shades — not the less, I feel, at a moment when the late Louisa Lady Ashburton, one of the most eminent of the friends from early years, joins the company. This so striking and interesting

personage, a rich, generous presence that, wherever encountered, seemed always to fill the foreground with colour, with picture, with fine mellow sound and, on the part of every one else, with a kind of traditional charmed, amused patience — this brilliant and fitful apparition was a familiar *figure* for our friends, as, throughout, for the society of her time, and I come, in my blurred record, frequently upon her name. The difficulty is really that she is one of those vivid, represented characters, one of those stamped and finished appearances that tempt the historian (especially if he have memory and imagination always at his heels) only too much and challenge him too far. There are figures we may pass with a look and touch with a finger, feeling any recognition kind and almost any adequate. But there are others whom to pass at all is, as it were, to pass *before* them—on the stairs or out of the room; so that we wait on them a little and hover, and while we thus wait find ourselves again in relation with them; than which any more summary process would be, we seem aware, both a breach of manners and a loss of opportunity. It easily happens, however, that the "relation," the old impression, the cluster of reminiscence, would take too much explaining, or require perhaps even too much

profaning; so that we find ourselves wishing we only had, so to speak, a free hand and a clean slate altogether, the really right conditions for transposing and reproducing. All of which simply means, I think, that the prose-painter of life, character, manners, licensed to render his experience in his own terms, might do more justice to such a subject than the mere enumerator, to whom liberties, as they are called, are forbidden. What matters indeed, what results from faded notes, I hasten to add, is that Lady Ashburton *was*, admirably, delightfully, a subject—for irresistible consideration, for, positively, a sort of glow of remembrance, the glow from which artistic projection sometimes eventually springs. This friendly light rests on occasions, incidents, accidents, in which a liberal oddity, a genial incoherence, an *expected* half funny, half happy turn of the affair, for the most part, appears to declare itself as the leading note. I come across too brief a mention, in particular, of a baffled visit to Loch Luichart in August, 1869—baffled, for the little party consisting of our friends, their daughter and Browning, because the lady of the Lake was far from home at the date of the appointment, and her guests made merry, for the time, instead, at a little inn, then described as "squalid," on

Loch Achnault, near Garve, with assistance from picnics (of the four) in the neighbouring heather, where, the rough meal not unsuccessfully enjoyed, Browning loudly read out "Rob Roy." Many persons will remember how freely it belonged to what I have called the fine presence (if presence be here the word) of the absent hostess of such occasions that the occasions themselves always somehow, before it was too late, recovered their feet, their breath, or whatever it might best be, and wound up in felicity. The episode of August, 1869, was, at any rate, it appeared, no exception to the rule; the delayed visit took place, with compensations abounding, with, in fact, for the consciousness of the present chronicler, more interesting passages of personal history than may here be touched upon.

I move here, indeed, between discretions and disappearances, in a somewhat dim backward labyrinth, where names and places are mainly the clue, though where, also, vague, small, pleasant lights, as in some old-time pleached walk, break in through the dusk. At the Grange, with the same incalculable friend, the Storys seem to have been, more or less repeatedly, from the first, in interesting company, and if names without faces—that is, without the provided peg to hang them to—were not, at the

best, but a meagre array, I might be content simply to enumerate. It is something of a peg possibly that in the autumn of 1862, which must have been the first occasion at the Grange, our friends listened to an interchange between Carlyle, the then Bishop of Oxford (Wilberforce) and (odder collocation still) General Sir William Gomme; an echo of which has remained with the youngest of the party. She remembers Carlyle's discussing with the Bishop, after dinner, the merits of a good conscience, a discussion interrupted by the return of the party to the dining-room, where, amid the still-lingering fumes of the rich repast, the Bishop read the evening prayers and then addressed the party, including the clustered domestics, an army, who had been busy clearing the board, on the virtue of self-sacrifice. It appears to have been at some hour of this sojourn that Carlyle, in an image that was to reverberate, described the American Civil War, then raging, as the burning-out of the smokiest chimney of the century. It was at all events perhaps after their restoration to the drawing-room that he took up again the other matter. "Good conscience, my Lord Bishop—what was ever the use of such a thing to any man? Take two of the best men that ever lived—what good did his good conscience ever do to

Oliver Cromwell or to St Paul?" And then on the Bishop's protesting against his speaking of these celebrities in the same breath: "Well then, confine it, if ye will, to St Paul. With *his* good conscience he was the most meeserable of men." Which is doubtless indeed a sufficiently pale gleam, even when I find it noted that a visit to Bowood had more or less immediately preceded this occasion. Visits to Naworth and to Ashridge were also, I gather, not a little in order in these years — the friendliest relation having, in one of those connections (and to name only the dead), established itself with Lady Marian Alford. "At Naworth"—I find the note in reference to a sequel to the episode, just related, of Loch Luichart—"Browning read aloud to us parts of 'The Ring and the Book.'" Taking scraps, further, as they come, in reference to this general period, I light upon a memorandum of Mrs Story's on her husband's acquaintance, and her own, with the first Lord Houghton, which, though that so distinguished and so amiable man has not wanted for commemoration, I reproduce, in part, from an equal impulse of sympathy. To what commemoration of him may not another friendly, another grateful, another highly vivid memory feel prompted to allow all its advantage?

"We first knew R. M. Milnes in London," Mrs Story writes, "before his marriage, and I remember our breakfasting with him, the first time, in company with Mrs Norton and Stirling of Keir. He was wonderfully kind to us, and we owed him many of our pleasantest acquaintances. After his marriage we continued to breakfast, for these occasions, thanks to his gentle and amiable wife, were still more attractive. Later on they became, I think, a little less 'select,' and even had sometimes, with the incongruous people, rather a Bohemian cast. Sir William Stirling used to call him the Bird of Paradox. I often met him at Lady William Russell's—who didn't, however, perhaps, do him full justice; and I recall one memorable night when he discussed with Abraham Hayward, with great warmth and far into the small hours, the question of the birth and extraction of Mary Fox, Lady Holland's adopted daughter. We never went to Fryston till 1884, though we had promised it ten years earlier. Then, at last, he was out of health and out of spirits, and, though full of kindness, it was not as of old. He came to Rome in 1885, and he at this time asked to sit to W. for his bust. At the sittings in the studio I made a point of being present that he might be diverted and content not to go to sleep

while W. worked — as sitters not always are. At times he was in excellent 'form,' most amusing, and very anecdotic; but he had also his silences, and then his slumber was deep. He reminded us of Landor by his going back with such vividness, as people of his age almost always do, to his far past life, his caring to talk almost only of what he had seen and done in youth. Landor he had known and talked of frankly and freely; and, like Landor himself, of Lord Byron, Lady Blessington, Louis Napoleon and others. The bust seemed a surprising success, considering his deficiencies as a sitter, and he said of it, with a laugh, when it was finished, 'It looks, I think, the Poet and the Peer.' He came to breakfast one morning, with Lady Galway, to meet Bishop Whipple of Minnesota, and he afterwards amiably said that this had been the thing in Rome that had given him the greatest pleasure—which we thought a great tribute to the excellent company of the Bishop. Lord Houghton would go anywhere, to the last, in spite of infirmity and fatigue, to see any one or anything that might amuse him, no matter who or what or where they were. He was truly brave in this pursuit."

It is perhaps early to take up some of these later of the old names, yet memory protests a

little against letting them quite go. And moreover if the London of Abraham Hayward is divided by but twenty years from the London of our new century, it seems really to look on at us from a greater antiquity. It was considerably more than twenty years ago that, dining out during the phase, as it now appears to me, of initiation and wonder, I received a hint of the stamp that the time and place were indeed assumed to have taken from the distinguished talker just named. I had begun by addressing myself to the lady on my left, who, however, gently enough, though with a certain anxiety, checked me. "Don't you think we ought to listen, rather, to what Mr Hayward is saying?"—she evidently had her opportunity on her conscience. My own was, accordingly, at that moment revealed to me, and I never failed, afterwards, with the renewal of my privilege, to listen. There links itself with this recollection—they may make a pair—that of an ancient gentleman—an ancient gentleman full of type, full of a tone that was dying out—who lived in a street, out of Piccadilly, in which the houses overlooked an amplitude of preserved space, and who entertained at a round table of noble dimensions. At this table, I learned from my host, one might precisely not hope *ever* to

"listen to Mr Hayward"—and for reasons that were, in the warning, sufficiently emphasised. I may not emphasise them here—and all the less, doubtless, as they appear to have been somewhat special to my friend, who was decidedly "quaint" and who afterwards suffered some cerebral disturbance. I was still able for a year or two to listen often enough for the lesson that practically resulted—the lesson that the talk easily recognised in London as the best is the delivery and establishment of the greatest possible number of *facts*, or in other words the unwinding, with or without comment or qualification, of the longest possible chain of "stories." One associated Mr Hayward and his recurrent, supereminent laugh thus with the story, and virtually, I noted, with the story alone—taking that product no doubt also, when needful, in the larger sense of the remarkable recorded or disputed contemporary or recent event, cases as to which the speaker was in possession of the "rights." What at all events remained with one was a contribution, of a kind, to the general sense that facts, facts, and again facts, were still the thing dearest to the English mind even in its hours of ease. I indeed remember wondering if there were not to be revealed to me, as for the promotion of these hours, some

other school of talk, in which some breath of the mind itself, some play of paradox, irony, thought, imagination, some wandering wind of fancy, some draught, in short, of the *idea*, might not be felt as circulating between the seated solidities, for the general lightening of the mass. This would have been a school handling the fact rather as the point of departure than as the point of arrival, the horse-block for mounting the winged steed of talk rather than as the stable for constantly riding him back to. The "story," in fine, in this other order—and surely so more worthy of the name—would have been the intellectual reaction from the circumstance presented, an exhibition interesting, amusing, vivid, dramatic, in proportion to the agility, or to the sincerity, of the intellect engaged. But this alternative inquiry, I may conclude, I am still conducting.

Aids of the causal sort I have just gathered from Mrs Story project, at all events, but faint shadows over the field of the pleasant Roman years, the happiest time of production, the fullest also of surrender (in hospitality, in curiosity, in free response) to the sovereign spirit of the place. The spirit of the place is what most comes back, in respect to any occasion, for the fond invoker of memories still denounceable as

at their best too meagre; since it is only as holding fast *that* key to all impressions, heterogeneous or other, that one may keep them either together or apart. Was it not, in old days, the special solvent of *all* appearances, *all* encounters, the element into which they simply melted, so that it mattered comparatively little who or what they individually were—mattering, as it did, so very much more, for the mind, that they were part of the general experience of Rome? This experience was in itself so constant and penetrating that almost nobody one might meet, almost nothing one might see, could aspire to any higher dignity than that of a note struck, just sensibly sounded, but made quite humble and relative, for the effect of the symphony. The symphony was a majestic whole, with which the individual would have been ill-advised to take a liberty, so that the greatest celebrities became thus nothing more than placed and waiting fiddles in the mighty orchestra, receiving their cue, as one took one's own explicit order, the sharp rap or recall, from the controlling influence that kept us all in tune. The spirit of the place figured, in fact, the master-conductor of a great harmonious band in which differences were disallowed, so near did one performer come to being as im-

portant—in other words as insignificant—as any other. That certainly was the great charm and the great ease—that no one, really, could be a bore about Rome, or even, to any purpose, under its cover, about anything else. For nothing practically *existed* but that our conditions met every want, and that we were absolutely in the spirit of them even in trying to name those they failed to supply. This effect was wholly peculiar—an action on the mind, the temper, the life, on speech, manners, intercourse, with which that of no other place could for a moment compete. People might elsewhere be stupid, might elsewhere be vulgar or cross or ugly, for the ways of offence are many; whereas here you cared so little whether they were or not that it was virtually as good as not knowing. They were not, in fact; nobody was any of these things, for the simple reason that nobody could afford, for very shame, to deny the harmonising charm. The truth is even, no doubt, that nobody could grossly dare any such profanity and expect still to live. Something would have happened—something that never did happen, thanks to our cheerful humility and exalted equality. I remember that in days, or rather on evenings, that now seem to me exquisitely dim, I met Matthew Arnold,

for the first time, at Palazzo Barberini, and became conscious then and there—more so at least than I had been before—of the interesting truth I attempt to utter. He had been, in prose and verse, the idol of my previous years, and nothing could have seemed in advance less doubtful than that to encounter him face to face, and under an influence so noble, would have made one fairly stagger with a sense of privilege. What actually happened, however, was that the sense of privilege found itself positively postponed; when I met him again, later on, in London, *then* it had free play. It was, on the Roman evening, as if, for all the world, we were *equally* great and happy, or still more, perhaps, equally nothing and nobody; we were related only to the enclosing fact of Rome, before which every one, it was easy to feel, bore himself with the same good manners.

They then, as it were, the good manners, became the form in which the noble influence was best recognised, so that you could fairly trace it from occasion to occasion, from one consenting victim to another. The victims may very well not have been themselves always conscious, but the conscious individual had them all, attentively, imaginatively, at his mercy—drawing precisely from that fact a support in his own

submission. He had the rare chance of seeing people kept in order, kept in position before the spectacle, so as to be themselves peculiarly accessible to observation. This faculty had, of course, in the nature of the case, to feed more on their essence and their type than, as it might have done elsewhere, on their extravagance and their overflow; but at least they couldn't elude, impose or deceive, as is always easy in London, Paris or New York, cities in which the spirit of the place has long since (certainly as an insidious spell) lost any advantage it may ever have practised over the spirit of the person. So, at any rate, fanciful as my plea may appear, I recover the old sense—brave even the imputation of making a mere Rome of words, talking of a Rome of my own which was no Rome of reality. That comes up as exactly the point—that no Rome of reality was concerned in our experience, that the whole thing was a rare state of the imagination, dosed and drugged, as I have already indicated, by the effectual Borgia cup, for the taste of which the simplest as well as the subtlest had a palate. Nothing, verily, used to strike us more than that people of whom, as we said, we wouldn't have expected it, people who had never before shown knowledge, taste or sensibility, had here quite knocked

under. They haunted Vatican halls and Palatine gardens; they were detached and pensive on the Pincian; they were silent in strange places; the habit of St Peter's they clung to as to a vice; the impression of the Campagna they stopped short in attempting to utter. And just as the lowly were brought up, so the mighty were brought down, there being no tribute to the matters in question that was not of the nature of sensibility. Such is the pleasant light with which I see the Barberini drawing-room suffused. It was not that there were not during the same years other interiors on which the benediction also rested; each interior—that was the secret—had its share of the felicity, very much as places of reunion to-day have their share of the electric light. It was virtually "turned on," for instance, during the late hours, that every one *had*, all day, to have been breathing golden air, and that the golden air was exhaled again by the simple fact of any presence. I see, as in a picture, remembered figures sit content or move about in it; I see, fairly, where it prevails, a sweetness in any combination of couples or groups. I listen to the rich voices of young women at the piano and find them all charged with the quality of the day. For there had always *been* a day—a day that, moreover,

was never so much of one as when (which was often) there was, for its expectation, to be also an evening. These sequences, these presciences certainly exist by Thames and Seine and Hudson, but quite, as they become familiar, without making us thrill at their touch. Their touch (since we discriminate) is coarse; it was only the Roman touch that was fine—which is the simple moral of my remarks.

LAST ROMAN YEARS

X.

GRAFFITI D'ITALIA.

We have seen that Charles Sumner wrote to Story in 1864 that he had been reading at once his "Leonardo," in "Blackwood," and his letters on the American Question in the "Daily News," and that he knew no other man who could have shown equal talent in such different styles of composition. The compliment may surely stand, for it was of a sort that, in various ways, Story never ceased to deserve. In turning over his pages and his papers I am even almost prompted, I confess, to commiserate his flexibility of attention. He was of course not so curst as not to have preferences of mind—having in abundance preferences of feeling; yet he almost grazed such a fate, and his success may perhaps be expressed by saying that he had not (either for his own perfect comfort or for that of his reader) enough indifferences. One might have been inclined to wish him the comparative rest

of an exclusive passion. Singularity, intensity of genius makes for repose, at its hours, scarcely less than it makes for agitation, and it is a question if we are really happiest when our powers keep such easy pace with our interests. Story was never conscious, when he was interested, of a lack of power—which is a state of mind to make interest a doubtful anodyne. There are eagernesses that genius of the exclusive order drops or recovers from. But he disliked at any time to drop anything, and that was, in a manner, a qualification of his heat. I have already spoken of his poetic spontaneity, the constitution of which might become for us, were we to surrender ourselves to criticism, a riddle worth the guessing. I speak of riddles because we feel in the presence of something that requires an explanation. How could he be, our friend, we sometimes find ourselves wondering, so restlessly, so sincerely æsthetic, and yet, constitutionally, so little insistent? We mean by insistence, in an artist, the act of throwing the whole weight of the mind, and of gathering it at the particular point (when the particular point is worth it) in order to do so. This, on the part of most artists—or at least on the part of those who are single in spirit—is an instinct and a necessity, becomes in fact

the principal sign we know them by. They feel unsafe, uncertain, exposed, unless the spirit, such as it is, be, at the point in question, "all there." Story's rather odd case, if I may call it so, was that when he wrote, prose or verse, he was "there" only in part—not, we infer, as completely, as anxiously, as he might have been. And this in spite of a great and genuine love; it was not at all as if prose and verse had been for him perfunctory cares. It was impossible to be more interested in the things of the mind and in the forms and combinations into which they overflow. The question of expression and style haunted him; the question of representation by words was ever as present to him as that of representation by marble or by bronze. Once in a while these ideas move him in the same direction with equal force; he produced, for instance, two Cleopatras, and it is difficult to say that the versified, the best of his shorter poems, is not as "good" as the so interesting statue with which it competes. The weight of the mind, taking the different occasions, threw itself wholly, we feel, into each; so that the image is about as living in the one case as in the other. Here, rather by exception, Story arrived at literary intensity—making his verses *insist*, as I have called it, just as he had, quite

admirably, been able to make the execution of his figure.

"Ah, me! this lifeless nature
Oppresses my heart and brain!
Oh, for a storm and thunder—
For lightning and wild fierce rain!
Fling down that lute—I hate it!
Take rather his buckler and sword,
And crash them and clash them together
Till this sleeping world is stirred.
Hark to my Indian beauty—
My cockatoo creamy white,
With roses under his feathers—
That flashes across the light!
Look, listen, as backward and forward
To his hoop of gold he clings,
How he trembles with crest uplifted,
And shrieks as he madly swings!
Oh, cockatoo, shriek for Antony!
Cry 'Come, my love, come home!'
Shriek 'Antony, Antony, Antony!'
Till he hears you even in Rome.
. . . . . .
I will lie and dream of the past time,
Aeons of thought away,
And through the jungle of memory
Loosen my fancy to play;
When, a smooth and velvety tiger,
Ribbed with yellow and black,
Supple and cushion-footed,
. . . . . .
I wandered my mate to greet.
Come to my arms, my hero,
The shadows of twilight grow,
And the tiger's ancient fierceness
In my veins begins to flow.

Come not cringing to sue me!
Take me with triumph and power,
As a warrior storms a fortress!
I will not shrink or cower.
Come, as you came in the desert,
Ere we were women and men,
When the tiger passions were in us,
And love as you loved me then!"

"Giannone," in "Graffiti d'Italia," is another charming thing that has *come*, by its own force, or that has, in other words, held the author hard enough to make him, in turn, squeeze out of his subject all it had to give, at the same time that the hand displayed is certainly a light hand, not concerned sternly to press. What happens here is that the poet really gives himself to the charm of his vision, so that there is no reserve: the pleasant image of the idle and hapless young Roman of the Pio Nono, of the Antonelli time stands before us with intensity, catching the light at every inch of his surface. The subject indeed really is the modern Roman temperament itself—as exhibited in youth; a little excised square of the Roman social picture. Nothing of Story's has more of the felicity (as also of the moral reaction) of his earlier experience.

"'Tis years, as you know, that I've lived in Rome,
Till now it's familiar to me as home;

And 'tis years ago I knew Giannone,
A capital fellow, with great black eyes,
And a pleasant smile of frank surprise,
And as gentle a pace as a lady's pony,
Ready to follow wherever you bid;
His oaths were 'Per Bacco!' and 'Dio Mio!'
And 'Guardi!' he cried to whatever you said;
But though not overfreighted with esprit or *brio*,
His heart was better by far than his head.
His education was rather scanty;
But what on earth could he have done
With an education, having one,
Unless he chose for the scarlet to run,
And study the Fathers and lives of the Santi?
Nevertheless I know he had read,
Because he quoted them, Tasso and Dante;
And so often he recommended the prosy
'Promessi Sposi,' I must suppose he
Had also achieved that tale of Manzoni.
And besides Monte Cristo and Uncle Tom,
And the history of Italy and Rome
(For he thoroughly knew how liberty's foot
Had been pinched and maimed and lamed in her boot),
He had studied with zeal the book of the mass
And *libretti* of all the operas.

. . . . . .

A 'guardia nobile' was Giannone,
By which he earned sufficient money
For his gloves, shirt-buttons, boots and hat,
Though it was scarcely enough for that.
And splendid he was on a gala day,
With his jingling sword and scarlet coat,
And his long jack-boots and helmet gay,
When along the streets he used to trot;
And great good luck it was to meet
Giannone when you wanted a seat

To hear the chant of the Miserere,
Or to get on the balcony high and airy,
To see the papal procession go
Over St Peter's pavement below,
Streaming along in its gorgeous show.
And then at Carnival such bouquets,
Such beautiful bonbons and princely ways,
Such elegant wavings of hat and hand,
Such smiles as no one could withstand,
Such compliments as made ours seem
Like pale skim-milk to his rich cream."

The end of this sketch of Roman manners in the unreformed day—a picture half humorous, half tender and all vivid—is that the ingenuous young man suffers himself to be entrapped by a governmental spy, who is not less neatly presented, and who extracts from him, in his cups, the secret of that little locked-up spark of liberalism which could glow even in the heart of a feather-headed dandy: whereby fate abruptly invests poor Giannone with a quite mismatched tragic dignity, and the shadow of the Inquisition, or of some other salutary discipline, like a wheel breaking a butterfly, passes over him so straight that he is reduced to the unknowable. He becomes interesting by being missed. These, at any rate, are a couple of the many-coloured flowers of "Graffiti d'Italia," which volume contains Story's most substantial poetic work. The sixty pieces or so of which it consists, and of

which the fine "Ginevra da Siena" is the most sustained and most important, had appeared from time to time, during some ten years, in "Blackwood," and this collection was in 1875 in its second edition. I have before me the whole of the author's copious correspondence with Mr John and Mr William Blackwood, than which nothing could more sufficiently show that Story abounded, whether for verse or for prose, in literary ideas. Not all of these, indeed but a small portion of them, did he find occasion to carry out; living, as he did, in the pleasantest place in the world, it was his fate, inevitably, to be interrupted and scattered, to expend himself for results of which, when time had sifted them, little remained but the appearance of his having been happy. But there was at the same time almost nothing he did not like to think of himself as doing, not dream of being able to do if this or that condition had been present. The conditions, the present and the absent, come back, no doubt, as we look at his life—which is called, we are well aware, being wise after the fact. It becomes interesting, in the light of so distinct an example, to extract from the case—the case of the permanent absentee or exile—the general lesson that may seem to us latent in it. This moral seems to be that somehow,

in the long-run, Story *paid*—paid for having sought his development even among the circumstances that at the time of his choice appeared not alone the only propitious, but the only possible. It was as if the circumstances on which, to do this, he had turned his back, had found an indirect way to be avenged for the discrimination. Inevitably, indeed, we are not able to say what a lifetime of Boston would have made, in him, or would have marred; we can only be sure we should in that case have had to deal with quite a different group of results. The form in which the other possibility perhaps presents itself is that of our feeling that, though he might have been less of a sculptor "at home," he might have been more of a poet.

Speculations as to what might have been are ever, I know, almost as futile as they are fascinating; but as alternative visions in respect to the American absentee in general I confess to finding that even at the worst their fascination justifies them. When I say "at the worst" I allude to those existences, numerous enough, that, in alien air, far from their native soil, have found themselves (sometimes quite unconsciously, but sometimes sorely suspecting) the prey of mere beguilement. That really rises before us as the formula of Story's Roman years,

making us—unless we yield, in the view, too much to wanton fancy—figure his career as a sort of beautiful sacrifice to a noble mistake. I cannot, in truth, otherwise describe the mistake than as that of the frank consent to be beguiled. It is for all the world as if there were always, for however earnest a man, some seed of danger in consciously planning for happiness, and a seed quite capable of sprouting even when the plan has succeeded. To have said "No—I give up everything else for a lifetime of the golden air; the golden air is *the* thing, no matter what others may be, and to have had it, all there is of it, that alone, for me, won't have been failure": to have expressed one's self in that sense, which was practically what Story did, was to make one's bid for felicity about as straight as possible. For, simply enough, it is of the old-time victim of Italy, and not of any more colourless fugitive from the Philistines, that I am thinking. His conception of the agreeable as of something constant, crude, immediate was doubtless the conception most involving an ultimate penalty. And so, accordingly, does our critical imagination play. The experience he had invoked, the experience he achieved, suggested to our friend a variety of subjects that might not otherwise have come in his way. That is

much, for any poet—so much that it may be asked what more there need have been. Only one thing more, in truth; to which I attach myself as to a tangible thread in this possibly too vague speculation. If the verse and the prose might, in other conditions, as I have hinted, have more completely filled out their scheme, the reason would seem to be not in any question of the encounter of other subjects, but in something deeper still—say, taking subjects for granted, in the *relation* of the writer to any of these and to all. The golden air, we tend to infer, did not make that relation quite intense, quite responsible; partly, no doubt, by taking it too much as a matter of course. Subjects float by, in Italy, as the fish in the sea may be supposed to float by a merman, who doubtless puts out a hand from time to time to grasp, for curiosity, some particularly iridescent specimen. But he has conceivably not the proper detachment for full appreciation. And I come round by the aid of this analogy to the truth I have been feeling my way to.

This truth—to make the matter comfortably clear—is that the "picturesque" subject, for literary art, has by no means all its advantage in the picturesque country; yields its full taste, gives out *all* its inspiration, in other words, in

some air unfriendly to the element at large. I seem, for instance, to see Story gouge out "Ginevra da Siena" from the block of his idea with a finer rage in — let me tell the whole truth—Boston by the Charles, or even in London by the Thames, than in Rome, in Florence, or, most of all, in the shuttered noon of the Sienese day itself. In London, in Boston, he would have *had* to live with his conception, there being nothing else about him of the same colour or quality. In Rome, Florence, Siena, there was too much—too much, that is, for a man for whom, otherwise dedicated, it had not been in question to become a second Gregorovius. Was it not this "too much" therefore that, given the nature of Story's mind and that disposition in it to flit rather than to rest for which I have almost commiserated it — was it not this too much that constituted precisely, and most characteristically and gracefully, the amusement of the wanton Italy at the expense of her victim? It may easily be said of course that such penalties should be smoothly faced, and my contention, I know,—for all it is worth,—is apparently refuted on the spot by the history of Robert Browning and *his* inspiration, suggestive as they both are of a quite opposed moral. Italy, obviously, was never too much for the author

of "Men and Women." He wrote "The Ring and the Book" indeed after he had come away, just as he had written most of his finest earlier things before he had migrated. As to "Men and Women," however, produced on the spot and face to face with the sources of his inspiration, his ten years of Florence and Rome may claim a full participation. There is nothing therefore to say in that connection but that the writer's "relation to his subject," which I have so freely made the golden air responsible for undermining, was, in Browning, constitutionally stout and single. That weight of the whole mind which we have also speculatively invoked was a pressure that he easily enough, at any point, that he in fact almost extravagantly, brought to bear. And then he was neither divided nor dispersed. He was devoted to no other art. This quite irrespectively of the question of his inherent power.

Story had been introduced to the Blackwoods by Colonel Hamley—in later years General Sir Edward Bruce Hamley—an intimate friend of his hosts of Mount Felix, where they must have met at an early date. The author of "Lady Lee's Widowhood" was, in respect of Maga, an excellent introducer, whose good office was, later on, to renew itself, happily for all concerned,

on behalf of another, one of the youngest, of his Mount Felix associates. I may add that his name meets me, as it comes up, with that imputed recognition to which we have responded for every figure in our dim procession, he too being, in his degree, one of the friendly, the less ghostly, shades. It was given me to know him in years subsequent to the dates just indicated, and I recognise to-day a small passage of history —the history of a sentiment and its accepted catastrophe, or at least conversion — in those pleasant relations with him that I like here to note. I remember his having been at the beginning of the Civil War one of the English names of warning to ears reached by social echoes—echoes wafted across the sea even from the lawn of kind Mount Felix. We had all read, in the North, "Lady Lee's Widowhood," and had admired the author even if we had not paid him; and it was, to express the thing mildly, a chill to our admiration to hear of his neither wishing nor prophesying success to our arms, but, on the contrary, quite luridly (as we gathered) calling down on them the last humiliation. Had we not, even during the War itself, flocked in our thousands to the romantic drama that Lester Wallack, the scenic idol of the period, had extracted from the charming book

and was causing everywhere to be played—whether or no to the advantage of the author's "rights"? I can scarce say to-day by what accident the legend of Hamley's ironic voice in particular acquired consistency — ironic voices having, in every quarter, sufficiently abounded; it is enough that I suffer myself to call back, across the gulf of forty years, and amid so many ghostly things, the shy, faint ghost of an impression. The impression is that of youth and a Newport summer night, that of three charming young women (two of them now no more) in a lamp-lit room the long windows of which stood open to a verandah and to the heavy September air. A young man, happy then in his kinship with the two, had sociably "looked in," and vividly remembers still how he was held by the charm of the third presence, that of the beautiful visitor who was staying for a week and who had just come back from England and from Mount Felix, where she had been entertained as a niece and a cousin. She was anecdotic, the so handsome girl, and I seem to have in my eyes again the light of happy experience and high social adventure with which, as well as with that of her noble beauty, she struck me as shining. One of her reminiscences bore upon a passage in which she had found herself patri-

otically engaged with the "chaffing" Artillery officer encountered at her uncle's house, whom (thanks to his association with that light literature of which I fear I consumed quantities) I was able to place, and whom I yet liked to think of as perhaps retreating before his brisk adversary in no too good order. Such were to remain the consequences of the imaginative habit—that trifles light as air (I leave my impression for that) only had to offer an appearance of interest to become absurdly concrete, in which form they constituted figures, pictures, stories. There was, I daresay, no other origin, or at least no better one, for my subsequent sense of a prepossession than this sweetly-uttered Newport echo, which, the other impressions mixed with it helping it to last, had not even after more than a dozen years died out. Which precisely was fortunate, as the history of our impressions goes; inasmuch as *if* it had faded away I should have missed the pleasure, the amusement, the interest (I scarce, again, know what to call it) of feeling the new association displace and supersede the old. I prolong more than I had meant my very small story—the second chapter of which was to be simply my coming to know, in London, at a later stage of my development and of his own,

the false prophet, or whatever he might be named, of Mount Felix, the not wholly unchivalrous figure of the Newport anecdote. I think he must have accepted by that time the true revelation; or perhaps rather it then scarce mattered if he had not. We had lived on into the modern world and there was plenty of fresh ground. I seem to remember him as justifying one's conception of one of the finest of types, that of the "cultivated" soldier, of the lover of letters who was also apt for action. If he had written on the art of war he had also written on Voltaire. He was firm enough, obviously, for anything, but his firmness was also itself a fineness, of which his talk gave the measure. So one had lived on to be amused at the other connotation, as the philosophers say, of his name—just as one was, less fortunately, to live on to see the whole strong personality avail him little when his hour had come, to see once more the grim play of the high London tide that reaches up and, with a single silent lap of its monstrous tongue, engulfs and washes away. I have liked, with that sad final vision, to rewrite his name.

"Ginevra da Siena," which appeared in "Blackwood" in 1872, is the most important of that group of poems as to which it was inevitable that Story should incur the charge

of trying to fit his tread to the deep footprints of Browning. These things — the "Padre Bandelli Proses," the "Leonardo da Vinci Poetises," the "Contemporary Criticism on Raffaelle," the "Primitive Christian in Rome" —affect us indeed as marked with two different degrees of the inevitable. The author's *ambiente* was for years the same as Browning's; his impressions, contacts, ideals were the same, producing for him—given indeed his difference of mind — very much the same intellectual experience. Italian history, the *cinquecento*, its figures, passions, interests, imagery, appealed to him, beset him, while at the same time he saw his friend, his master (as he would have liked to hold him) still more largely exposed to the influence and strongly moved by it to produce. His disposition, moreover, as his sculpture sufficiently shows, was to project characters, individuals, states of mind and of feeling; which was what Browning had again done with splendid success. The only way in which Browning could have warned him off would have been, perhaps, by the splendour; he had certainly done nothing to discredit the attempt—had only made the challenge of the general field more effective and inspiring. He had placed the challenge, in a word, in its light,

for Story, or for any one, to take up, and Story took it up as being, so to speak, the person nearest. He is surely not to be accused of having Browningised without being Browning; in the first place, because the effort *not* to write about an importunate Italy is an unfair strain to impose on any responsive mind; and in the second because, as the experiment shows, the tone achieved is as little Browningesque as possible. Story is limpid, so far as he goes—is crystalline; he is simple, in fine, where Browning bristles with complexity. He arrives, naturally, at a very much lower degree of intensity, but there is at any rate nothing either presumptuous or ridiculous in his handling of the bow. He bends it, and the arrow goes straight enough.

"At last, however, as you see, 'tis done—
All but our Lord's head, and the Judas there.
A month ago he finished the St John
And has not touched it since that I'm aware.
And now he neither seems to think or care
About the rest, but wanders up and down
The cloistered gallery in his long dark gown,
Picking the black stones out to step upon;
Or through the garden paces listlessly
With eyes fixed on the ground, hour after hour,
While now and then he stoops and picks a flower,
And smells it, as it were, abstractedly.
What he is doing is a plague to me!
Sometimes he stands before yon orange-pot,

His hands behind him, just as if he saw
Some curious thing upon its leaves,
And then with a quick glance as if a sudden thought
Had struck his mind there standing on the spot,
He takes a little tablet out to draw;
Then, muttering to himself, walks on agen.
He is the very oddest man of men!
Brother Anselmo tells me that the book
('Twas left by chance upon a bench one day,
And in its leaves our brother got a look)
Is scribbled over with all sorts of things—
Notes about colours, how to mix and lay,
With plans of flying figures, frames for wings,
Caricatures and forts and scaffoldings,
The skeletons of men and beasts and birds,
Engines and cabalistic signs and words,
Some written backwards, notes of music, lyres,
And wheels with boilers under them and fires,
A sort of lute made of a horse's skull,
Sonnets and other idle scraps of rhyme—
Of things like this the book was scribbled full.
I pray your Highness now, is this the way,
Instead of painting every day all day,
For him to trifle with our precious time?"

—which, as may easily be gathered, is the contemporary view of Leonardo during his troubled work on his Last Supper. We feel the contemporary view, I think, quite pleasantly enough caught to refresh our conviction of the puerility of any pretended estimate of property in *subject*. A subject is never anything but his who can make something of it,

and it is the thing made that becomes the property. But as between the thing made and the making the distinction is not to be seized, it is to the treatment alone that the fact of possession attaches—from which it is superfluous to warn us off. The treatment—it was long ago said in another way—is the man himself, whom we may be left free to plagiarise if we are able. Such, in other words, is the looseness with which we speak of another's doing the thing "like" him. Its being the fruit of another's identity may ever be trusted to make it different enough.

In "Ginevra," at all events, Story's subject is fine, as he had almost inveterately, and in a degree that his success in production scarce matched, the sense of the fine subject. Ginevra is a young, unhappy wife—as to whom we feel a little that, though the place about her gives out a colour, her period is ambiguously expressed—practically shut up for life, through long, blank years, in punishment for the *appearance* of infidelity to her husband. Childless, neglected, forlorn, she has conceived a passion for a young man who offers her the happiness her husband denies her—a passion under stress of which she has stood with him, for an hour, on the edge of their common abyss. What has

happened, however, is that, the abyss somehow yawning too ominously, they have receded in a sort of accepted terror and have separated while still innocent in fact. "Ideal" beauty, rather perhaps than familiar, or at least than historic, truth, is the mark, at this moment, of their conduct—the presentation of which does for them, none the less, all it artfully can. The case as given us is moreover the interesting one, since the subject springs straight out of it. This consists, in three words, of the fact that the husband, cognisant, and willing to be, only of their secret passion, with its offence to himself alone vivid to him, charges the young woman, formidably, with the guilt from which she has really, at the crisis, recoiled, and, whether wholly convinced or but coldly vindictive (since she is, after all, but too tangibly in love), will receive no denial and grant no mercy. The pair, for him, naturally perjured, cannot *not* have done the deed and stained his honour, and of the mystic influence under which we are to understand that they recovered themselves in time he is incapable of taking account. He vows vengeance upon the lover, whose life, he declares to his wife, is now forfeit, so that she, seeing her friend doomed, and doomed for nothing, has a wonderful, and not unnatural,

revulsion and outbreak. She too is doomed, and doomed, like the young man, for a completeness of union she has never known; so that not to have known it is what becomes for her, of a sudden, horribly intolerable, and, as if to falsify the barren fact even to her own sense, she frantically proclaims and publishes what she has at first denied. Her confession *then*, for her husband, has not the truth of her original protest; the character of the passion of her second attitude contrasts with that of the passion of her first. By a revulsion of his own thereupon, he is obliged to embrace something even more detestable than the idea of his wrong, some notion of the refinement of devotion, on the part of each of the others, that had, at any rate for the time, operated; and this vision it is—practically a deeper defiance of him than any other—that most inflames and determines him. He challenges, fights and slays the lover; after which he has with his wife an encounter that marks the dramatic climax of the situation, bringing out as it does, for each, the tragic vanity of all that has happened. For this humiliation, however, *he* has at least the remedy of the old-time marital power; Ginevra can but drink to the dregs the cup he compels her to drain. Banished and rigidly confined, she be-

comes another blighted Mariana, with the lone Sienese villa for her moated grange, where she is visited at last by a friend of her younger years, to whom she counts over the links that chain her to the past. She sits, she roams, in the maddening stillness with her "fault"—that worst of faults (now a mere mocking mistake) of which the bitterness is that she has not even the memory of possession. So at least, to my eyes, the subject presents itself, though I will not engage that this is the closest possible report of Story's treatment of it. He has none the less, through the whole thing, felicities of tone, happy notes and shades that are like memories of the Tuscan midsummer on terraces where the lizard darts and in rooms where the fixed frescoes, in long siestas, give upon nerves strained by exile.

The poems contained in "Graffiti d'Italia" were in 1885 republished by the author in a general collection of his verse. These two volumes, designated respectively as "Parchments and Portraits" and as "Monologues and Lyrics," contain a number of pieces—notably "A Roman Lawyer in Jerusalem: the Case of Judas"—not included in the Graffiti. Dear to Story's imagination, he repeatedly showed, was the rank Rome of the earlier or later Empire; witness,

for instance, in the "Introduction" to the poem just named, his mention of what he covets more than any of the so numerous lost literary treasures of antiquity—

> "Stern Agrippina's diary and life,
> Writ by herself, recording all her thoughts,
> Deeds, passions—all the doings of old Rome,
> Swarming around her, rife with scandals, crimes."

He speaks of these things always with force and felicity—

> "He pants to stand
> In its vast circus all alive with heads
> And quivering arms and floating robes, the air
> Thrilled by the roaring *fremitus* of men,
> The sun-lit awning heaving overhead,
> Swollen and strained against its corded veins,
> And flapping out its hem with loud report;
> The wild beasts roaring from the pit below,
> The wilder crowd responding from above."

"A Roman Lawyer," the most sustained and on the whole the most successful of his attempts to reconstitute, as an individual case, some outlived view of some historic event, joins to the merit of a great deal of ingenuity and of point the misfortune of a want of the poetic quality. This deficiency, of a truth, it shares with Browning's "Mr Sludge" or "Bishop Blougram," yet with the elements of irony and philosophy less potent than in those examples. What most strikes us,

on Story's behalf, in the particular instance, is the play of a mind that had enjoyed a legal as well as a poetic training. Had the author adhered to his original profession it would doubtless have come in his way to do his best for no small number of Judases not known to fame, or condemned at least to a more limited execration; in which direction, also, he would probably have obtained his due proportion of acquittals. He works brilliantly, at all events, in "A Roman Lawyer" for that of his supposititious client, for whose good faith he pressingly pleads, for whom he in fact claims the distinction, among the other followers of Christ, of supreme loyalty. Judas's apparent lapse from this attitude was a mistake of judgment and an excess of zeal. He was but too passionately impatient to act in the sense of his Lord's sublimest pretension and to help him to the opportunity to be deified. The changes are richly rung on all the possibilities of the paradox, and what the author enjoys, we feel, is his finding it intellectually, professionally, so workable. He becomes thereby himself the Roman lawyer, circulating in memory amid the scenes and objects to which his fondest fancy was attached.

Visibly, during all his Roman years, he lived a double, or perhaps rather a triple inner life.

I count his personal and social existence as his outer. Then came, in the first place, his communion with the forms that the art of the studio was to translate. After that came the constant appeal of the actual and present Roman world, always nudging him with suggestions for satires, for portraits, for pictures grave and gay. Most deeply within, to all appearance, sat the vision of the *other* time, the alternative, the incomparable, real Rome; in the light of which I am mistaken if the past was not still more peopled and furnished for him than the present. *There* was the crowd in which, in excursions of the spirit, he lost himself. Let me add, however, that the echoes of the contemporary scene, in the two volumes of 1885, testify to the colour, to the innumerable sharp accents, of surrounding life in a way to excite, at a distance, our bitter envy of so much precious opportunity. I have mentioned "Giannone," and should like, with more margin, to advert to such things as "The Antechamber of Monsignore," as "Il Curato," as "Baron Fisco at Home," as, above all, "Zia Nica," this last-named (the portrait of an old tavern-crone in whom the memory of adventures and the fires of passion still smoulder) being a small cabinet-picture brilliantly brushed. To one of the poems in particular contained in "Parch-

ments and Portraits" attaches, I think, the interest of a high degree of sincerity. "Girolamo, detto il Fiorentino, Desponds and Abuses the World"—this heading is borne by a composition of some eight pages which is further ushered in by an extract, in the original Italian, from a *lettera inedita di Girolamo* really proceeding, we feel, from the same pen. The whole thing expresses finely and pathetically the weariness of the artist who, with whatever native distinction, has had, at maturity, his full share of disappointment and frustration.

> "Success! Yes, while you stinted me in praise
> My pride upheld me; to myself I said
> 'Some time they'll praise me, after I am dead.
> The work is good, although the world delays;
> I for the prize can wait.' But now you blow
> The trumpet in my honour I bend low,
> And from my eyes my work's best charm has fled.
> Once I compared it with the world's neglect,
> And proudly said ''Tis better than they see.'
> Now I behold it tainted with defect
> In the broad light of what it ought to be."

Such passages in an artist's projection of another artist may mostly be taken as the revelation of the former's own emotion. Not less autobiographic, and touching precisely by reason of their slenderness of artifice, are, among the lyrics, the

few verses entitled "The Sad Country," evidently the persistent echo, after years, of the least endurable of the writer's bereavements.

"There is a sad, sad country,
Where often I go to see
A little child that for all my love
Will never come back to me.

There smiles he serenely on me
With a look that makes me cry;
And he prattling runs beside me
Till I wish that I could die.

That country is dim and dreary,
Yet I cannot keep away,
Though the shadows are heavy and dark,
And the sunlight sadder than they.

And there, in a ruined garden,
Which once was gay with flowers,
I sit by a broken fountain,
And weep and pray for hours."

The lyrics in this collection are the least numerous pieces, and, though Story was, as I have noted, familiar with his lyre, are not perhaps the most successful. Among them nevertheless is the fine "Io Victis!" which was apparently to excite a very general admiration. It will be found, if I mistake not, in many an American anthology.

"I sing the hymn of the conquered, who fell in the Battle of Life,
The hymn of the wounded, the beaten, who died overwhelmed in the strife.
Not the jubilant song of the victors, for whom the resounding acclaim
Of nations was lifted in chorus, whose brows wore the chaplet of fame,
But the hymn of the low and the humble, the weary, the broken in heart,
Who strove and who failed, acting bravely a silent and desperate part;
Whose youth bore no flower on its branches, whose hopes burned in ashes away,
From whose hands slipped the prize they had grasped at, who stood at the dying of day
With the wreck of their life all around them, unpitied, unheeded, alone,
With Death swooping down o'er their failure, and all but their faith overthrown."

The two small volumes entitled respectively "He and She: A Poet's Portfolio" and "A Poet's Portfolio: Later Readings," and published in 1884 and 1894, strikingly commemorate Story's lyric overflow, really illustrating, on this account, a case of some oddity. The Poet meets the Lady in a woodland place, and, spending summer hours together, they talk of many things, more or less of everything; during the intervals of which—and the intervals diminish as the book proceeds

—he reads out to her the loose verses, "fugitive" pieces, as such things are called, that he happens to have on hand. He is well provided, for his portfolio produces them as freely as if they had long been, from twenty quarters, regularly returned with thanks. The friends discuss them a little, but not overmuch, for it is the sign of the colloquial form, as Story liked to use it, that the talk is off on the instant, in any direction, whenever the scent is crossed. And so the "inedited" poems succeed each other, untitled and unclassified, almost like improvisations of the moment, till they beget at last that perplexity as to the author's poetic *consciousness* which I have already noted. It becomes, in a manner, an irresponsible outpouring; so that, to repeat, we wonder at the mixture of so much eloquence with so much indifference. The lyric voice is all there, but it seems detached and automatic, sounding—even when most charmingly—as from some pleasant but unregulated habit. Story therefore affects us as concurring, curiously, almost perversely, in some fine extravagant waste or leakage, the consequence of his living with a certain poetic magnificence. He has the air, through the two volumes in question, of caring inordinately little to *present*

his compositions, to prepare them for company or otherwise insist on their individual dignity. Such are the eccentricities of free and abundant dreamers. Touching, in a high degree, at the same time, on a possible supposition, is the particular device of form that I have described. The supposition is that some of the many lyrics so gathered in may have returned to the fold, disconcerted, out of countenance, after a rough experience of the periodical press. Had some of them really wandered far without encountering sympathy? Their fate would have differed in this case markedly from that of many members of the same general flock, who, going forth to seek their fortune, had also promptly enough found it. Yet one catches one's self, critically, fairly liking to think, for the beautiful pathos of it, that we have here an almost unique case of free ventures practically shipwrecked, bruised and scared creatures welcomed back, in all the silence of their misadventure, without a complaint or a sigh. It is as if the author had really said, with proud good-humour, "Well then, poor dears, *I'll* do what I can for you"; and then, having detached from each the little tinkling bell of its original appeal, had mustered them all afresh and dropped them into the promiscuous pot, so that lent, as it were, to the tragi-comic joke, they

should at least flavour the broth. So, at any rate, on their behalf, a restless critic may embroider.

I gather, meanwhile, however, that our friend's fondest dream in a poetic way would have been to write some play susceptible of presentation—a possibility round which his imagination, it must be added, all too sceptically hovered. It was the effort in the world that most required confidence, and not only confidence in general, but an adequate dose of the particular theatric intimacy. He published "Nero" in 1875, and, more reservedly, he caused "Stephania" to be privately printed a few years later. I do not speak of the two or three small comedies offered during bright Roman winters to Barberini audiences—or at least speak of them, and of Shakespearean evenings equally offered, and of his personal love of the actor's art, and of the handsome young costumed figures, the Portia, the Nerissa, the Antonio, the Bassanio, that I seem to see clustered as in a Veronese picture round his vivid Shylock, only for their recall, which I find in its way touching, of that discouraged scenic curiosity which would yet not consent to become a sound indifference. Having printed "Stephania," of which the subject (given the kind of thing) is, again, full of possibilities, he sent the piece to his old friend Lord Lytton,

whose acknowledgment is before me. Their correspondence had, with the lapse of time and the multiplication of the other occupations of each, inevitably shrunken, and Lytton was at this time British Ambassador to France. Story, I may premise, had heard from him a short time previously, in a note of February 21st, 1888. "A thousand affectionate thanks," he then wrote from Paris, "for your letter of the 18th, just received. I have already had the pleasure of making your son Julian's acquaintance here at the Embassy, and have long been impatient for an opportunity to make acquaintance with his studio. But human language cannot describe the incessant rush of my life at Paris up to the present moment. Niagara is nothing to it. I have scarce time to breathe, and as for literary work——! Good heavens, how I envy you the life of calm creation, and how I wish I had never set my foot on this treadmill! You will have a charming Ambassador [to Italy] in Dufferin, and I envy him, and congratulate you, on his appointment." At the time of his later writing Story was at St Moritz, in the Engadine, where, as we shall see, he had built himself a final refuge from the stress of the Italian summer.

Lord Lytton to W. W. Story.

"HÔTEL BERNINA, SAMADEN, *Aug. 22nd*, 1888.

. . . "I can't tell you how delightful to me was my little glimpse of you the other day, nor what old and sweet associations it revived. I have often thought of your Engadine home and wondered what it was like, for I fancied you had built your tabernacle among these mountains many years ago, knowing that you had long been a Swiss proprietor. And, though I have not fallen in love either with the scenery or the climate of this lofty land, I must say that the loveliest spot I have seen here is your domain, and that I think your house, 'both in conception and execution,' a real creation of genius. I missed however, or perhaps I ought to say neglected, the opportunity of a word with you about your 'Stephania,' which I read at Paris with great interest. The fact is, I felt shy of talking about it before a family audience; and the more so as my impressions of the play are mixed and not easily describable without tedious reference to certain notions of my own about dramatic construction. I read it under the great disadvantage of having read not long previously an acting play on the same subject by Karl Edler, which had powerfully affected me, and parts of which, indeed, I had

read with very wet eyes. I came therefore to the perusal of your play with a mind prepossessed by the emotional effects of a different conception and treatment of its subject. I have never read any imaginative writing of yours that has not seemed special to yourself, and your 'Stephania' is no exception. What little I know of the story of Crescentius and his wife inclines me to think, moreover, that your treatment of it is probably more true to history than Edler's; but his, at least in its effect upon myself, is more pathetic; and, rightly or wrongly, I have accustomed myself to regard drama as the most emotional of all arts. Conflict of motives, producing in circumstance situations from which there is apparently no issue, and in feeling or action problems that on the face of them strike the audience or the reader as insoluble, seems to me to lie at the foundation of all its effects; and it deals in such rapid and vehement contrast that of all arts it is perhaps the most opposed in every one of its conditions to the art in which your genius has found its fullest and freest, as well as highest, development."

The situation depicted in "Stephania" had already been presented by Story in that com-

pressed volume on Castle St Angelo which may be taken as a sequel or appendix to "Roba di Roma." The record of mediæval turbulence finds itself in those pages rather too foreshortened for lucidity, but the anecdote of the perjury of the Emperor Otho III. and of Stephania's vengence emerges sufficiently distinct. Crescentius, Consul of Rome in 1002, holding the castle against the Emperor at some customary crisis, surrenders at last on Otho's taking a solemn engagement to spare his life. In possession of the stronghold, and with Crescentius in his power, Otho then, in defiance of his sacred pledge, causes his victim to be hanged from the ramparts, after which he departs from Rome. Stephania, meanwhile, the Consul's beautiful and brooding widow, takes refuge in a convent, nursing her wrong and her grief till, in the fulness of time, Otho reappears. Her opportunity, with this, dawns upon her; she comes back to the world and obtains access to the Emperor, on whom she exerts such fascination that, though aware of her identity, he offers her the apparent possibility of becoming his wife. He, more substantially, does make her his mistress, which she consents to become in order to carry out the more effectively her prime intention—that of making him pay with

his own false life for her husband's. This, in the end, is what she accomplishes: Otho dies by her hand when most completely in her power. The subject, for a writer getting into close quarters with it, had much to give, the general measure of which is all to Story's honour. His difficulty, however, has been that he marches through it with too straight a step and reaches his catastrophe by too simple a process. He had evidently, after his "Nero," felt, for the dream of representation, the importance of being simple; but endless are the possible vicissitudes of that perilous pursuit. The writer who holds his situation tight squeezes too much out of it—more than managers, actors, more even than the round-mouthed public itself can swallow, or at any rate digest. The writer who holds it loosely, on the other hand, lets it slip through his fingers. So, possibly, would Story's correspondent have described the misadventure that, dramatically speaking, had lain in wait for "Stephania." The drama was to turn inevitably to the play of inward things, of mixed and discordant feelings, and of this progression the heroine's mind and attitude were to become the open field. This, I take it, represents the "emotion" for which the situation would have been valuable to Lord Lytton.

Story cuts the emotion short—considers it too little, flattering himself, no doubt, that he has in hand a vivid picture of action. This is too questionably the case; the theme, all round, requires amplification; its interest is in its possible details and in the amount of illustration the heroine's ambiguous behaviour demands. Story has faced indeed the ambiguity, shown her as apparently tempted—that is pacified, or, as we say, "squared"—so long as she can believe in her chance of becoming Empress. It is when this chance fails that her purely vindictive passion revives; she would otherwise, we seem to gather, have been precariously bribable. The complication is interesting, though making the story materially less the illustration of a mere vindictive *plan*. The author may very well have thought the mere vindictive plan too stale a theatrical property. Only in that case he should have insisted more on his alternative.

"Nero," published in 1875, is not open to the charge of a want of amplification, inasmuch as its five acts deal, in successive scenes and jumps of space, with every incident of the engaging protagonist's career. The author speaks of it as a play, and as if it might have been placed on the stage; yet it is in fact but a scenic

chronicle, of a sort for which he had, in the Elizabethan drama, or even in Goethe's "Götz von Berlichingen," plenty of precedent. More than anything, indeed, this production exemplifies that fondest habit of the writer's fancy at which we have already glanced, the curiosity, the artistic sympathy, that he held at the disposal of the more "lurid" Roman past. The thing becomes thus a piece of not particularly pondered intellectual sport, an imaginative romp, for exercise, through Tacitus and Suetonius. I find its most attaching page, I confess, its dedication. In this epistle, addressed to the late Frances Anne Kemble, he recalls the occasion of his having, during the winter of 1873-74, read his composition aloud to three or four friends, of whom Mrs Kemble had been one. The author of these reminiscences happened to be another, and he well remembers how the shock of earthquake to which the letter alludes contributed to our general impression of evoked horror. For Story read so richly and forcibly that he did vividly evoke, and that the interpretation for which he enviously sighs might well have rested in his own hands. To know Mrs Kemble was to know, certainly, the one, the supreme reader—a range of tone, an expression, a variety that nothing could equal; but it was to know

at the same time, wonderfully enough, a listener almost as articulate, whose admirable face was then scarce less at play than when it accompanied her admirable voice. I seem to recall that, though my ears, on the far-away evening in question, were all for Story, my eyes were for our distinguished companion, in whom the whole matter was mirrored, commented, silently *re*presented.

By nothing that Story published is he perhaps so completely characterised as by the two volumes of "Conversations in a Studio" which appeared in 1890, after having run their course in "Blackwood." Their particular weakness may be mentioned at once, to get it out of the way: they suffer, that is, as prolonged colloquies between a pair of talkers, by the absence, in any case, of a thesis or argument, and above all by that of any exemplified opposition of view between the interlocutors. A talk, a "real" talk, when of interest, is in its degree, at the least, a drama, with some question or conclusion in the balance and in suspense; and that the author should, in these things, not have been mindful of that truth illustrates markedly enough that friendly and confident attitude in him toward his subject which ever lightened his sense of difficulty. A letter from his publisher, while

the Conversations were coming out in Maga, expresses regret that the two discursive friends should not have been more differentiated; to which Story's reply was, precisely *with* his confidence, that he had not intended in any degree an action or a scene, or that anything should depend on Belton's or on Mallett's character. What he *had*, none the less, we take it, meant, was that something should depend on their differences—nothing less in fact than the full squeeze to be administered, at every turn, to the idea in hand. Yielding or not, at any rate, to the highest pressure, the idea, in these pages, does spring up and abound, testifying to the variety of the author's preoccupations and curiosities. These are historic, æsthetic, scientific, theologic, and to each of his lively hares, as he starts it, he gives the most animated chase. Wit and fancy, as well as a multifarious reading, accompany the pursuit, with the single drawback, as I say, that our friends hunt too much together. It had been the author's notion, we can scarce doubt, that one of them should have represented his own mind, own sympathies and convictions, and that the other should have offered a surface to react or rebound from; but this purpose, if entertained, soon fails of effect. The speakers abound mainly in each other's

sense, and with the consequence, really, that this sense becomes *all* the author's. They project together on one occasion a "night of revel," in which certain of the great figures of history may meet round a table splendidly spread; whereupon Story inevitably strikes his leading note. "My first man then shall be Antony, with his bull-neck, his rich curling hair, his robust figure, his deep-set sparkling eyes and his brave open look." It is impossible to do more for Antony — with what the "Graffiti" had already done for him in the verses, of such breadth and ease, that show him as panting to rejoin Cleopatra and as yielding blindly to his impulse.

I should add that the "first man" of the second speaker is, no less characteristically, Shakespeare, for Story is a signal case of the obsession of that name, which seldom fails to shine out for him, at the end of a few steps, in whatever direction he moves. His vision of Goethe, in truth, is scarce less importunate, but quite to the opposite end, his tolerance of the great German being probably the shortest ever placed on record and his antipathy expressed with amusing frankness. Shakespeare, on the great occasion, will be "the handsomest man at the table, whoever comes"—which gives as

nothing could do the scale and tone of our friend's loyalty. It was certainly for his peace of mind that he was not to live to be present at the so marked multiplication of our late-coming wonderments, questions, doubts. We feel that he could scarce decently have endured them; we feel assuredly that they would have darkened his close of life; while nothing indeed is, further, more apparent than the dramatic value, as it may be called in the connection here suggested, of so typical a case of Shake-speareolatry. So much of Story's attitude can be gathered from his various prose pages that we feel him to present uncritical adoration in its most ingenuous, though truly not in its least militant, form; and we get thereby an interesting measure of the positively personal ravage that might become the consequence, far and wide, of any effective movement for the revision of the most attaching of literary mysteries. We fairly see it, the question of the title of the Stratford player, loom before us, in this lurid light, as a sort of huger Dreyfus Case of the future, splitting the Anglo-Saxon race into monstrous hostile camps, dividing and desolating families and friendships as nothing has ever done, arraying in short mighty armies

face to face. The vision is apocalyptic, and may give us all pause; and I meanwhile feel it, without joking, a point made for peace that our irrepressible friend is out of the fray.

When Belton, in the "Conversations," suggests Sir Philip Sidney for their symposium, his companion, though admitting the claim, hopes the author of the "Arcadia" will not wish to read that work to them. "No fear of that," Belton wittily answers; "he is a gentleman every inch of him"—than which nothing could better cover all the delicacies of the case. Whereupon the current suddenly floats us, as is its wont, a million miles away, to the question of the wines of antiquity, and of the queer composition of several, in which the writer shows himself intimately versed. This carries us, through other matters, to an amusing echo of the most popular manner of Longfellow, boldly but not viciously thrown off by Mallett, on whom, as so far from the first to see how his illustrious friend, as the phrase is, lent himself, the guilt of parody may doubtless sit lightly.

"Spake full well in ages olden
One of the Teutonic race:
Speech is silvern—silence golden;
Everything should have its place.

Least said is the soonest mended;
We must give as we would take;
And the bow too rudely bended,
In the end is sure to break."

But I may not attempt an enumeration of the constant heterogeneous haul, in these pages, of Story's large loose net. He darts from the Roman Code to the Decay of Enthusiasm, and from a long and extraordinarily enumerative disquisition on recorded longevities to the pronunciation of Latin, taking Byron, Michael Angelo, Lope da Vega, Dryden, Goethe and a hundred other matters by the way, and looking in on Shakespeare with or without an occasion. Gallantly frank is his impatience of "Faust," which he regards as a strangely overesteemed performance; making dauntlessly the point—obviously makeable—of the curiously inadequate nature of the bribe offered by Mephistopheles, the meagre bait (the mere taste of youth and of a simple girl) with which so seasoned a sage is caught. The question is interesting and may be, has been, argued; the critic's idea being that the *quality* of the miracle was worthy neither of the tempter nor of the tempted; but to follow here at all is to follow too far. I follow, for the moment, but into the volume of "Excursions in Art and Letters," published

in 1891 and consisting of five papers, on technical subjects, that had already appeared. They are animated studies, and when Story went into things he went in well, astride, for the most part, of some active hobby of his own, and rode hard to a conclusion. He concludes, for instance, almost with passion, against the presumed connection of Phidias and the Elgin marbles. He concludes, as to the history of the art of casting in plaster, against the views of his old friend of Boston and of Rome, Charles C. Perkins—author of "Du Moulage en Plâtre chez les Anciens"—controverts with a success I may not estimate the assumption of the early birth of the process, placing it, to his own satisfaction, at the dawn of the Renaissance. And when I speak of his inclination to find subjects it is with a sense of the bravery that makes it possible for him to call down into colloquy the shade of Marcus Aurelius, with whom he discusses, and on no poor level, the respective merits of Paganism and Christianity. He was as attached to the great philosophic emperor as he was indifferent to the great German poet. "There he stood before me as I knew him from his busts and statues, with his full brow and eyes, his sweet mouth, his curling hair, now a little grizzled with age, and a deep meditat-

ive look of tender earnestness on his face. I know not why I was not startled to see him there, but I was not. Nothing seemed more fitting. . . ." The case being, admirably, that on the stormy winter night, in the old Roman palace, when the bells of the Capucin convent had struck two, the student of the Meditations sat so under their noble spell that communion of spirit with spirit rose to its highest possibility. The student's reverence indeed is not paralysing, else we should have had none of the beauty of the conversation, which comes out admirably, for instance, in the emperor's retort upon his guest's challenge in respect to the puerility of so much of the ancient annals of Olympus. What had the Christians to show, was inquired on this occasion, if they compared their weak Madonna and her emaciated Son with the splendour of the Greek types? "Who could look at that magnificent impersonation of Zeus at Olympia, by Phidias, so grand, so simple, so serene, with its golden robes and hair, its divine expression of power and sweetness, its immense proportions, its perfection of workmanship, and not feel that they were in the presence of an august, tremendous and impassionate power?" Which is a question that, letting the answer drop, we may like to leave

our accomplished friend contentedly, gratefully submissive to; in the attitude of charmed response to the sovereign suggestion of Rome, housed, alike for study and for society, by the brave Barberini walls, and with the familiar, the year-long sound from the neighbouring convent just figuring the voice of the siren.

XI.

AMERICAN COMMISSIONS.

STORY paid, with his wife, in 1882, a visit of some length to his own country, where his time was mainly spent in New York, Boston and Washington. His daughter had married in 1876 a distinguished Florentine and retired soldier, the Commendatore Simone Peruzzi, attached to the service and high in the confidence of the late King Humbert, and, separated in consequence from her parents, she was from this time the correspondent to whom their letters were mainly addressed. I find one of these, from the neighbourhood of Boston, but undated, and I refer it, from presumption, though not with entire confidence, to this summer of 1882.

Mrs Story to her Daughter.

"ELM HILL, ROXBURY, *Aug. 6th.*

. . . "I can get no time for retiring to my own occupations; life is all *en évidence*, and

pretty nearly all of it passed in full conclave somewhere or other. But this is the necessary consequence of a short visit at the end of a long absence. We had a most charming and refreshing visit at the Dexters'—refreshing in more senses than one, for the heat of Boston is beyond anything you have ever dreamed of. We returned there to Grandmama's house, but were forced to flight again by the heat of the nights and the army of mosquitoes. Here at Elm Hill it is most charming; a beautiful house in a lovely spot, handsome and agreeable people and lovely children, horses and carriages to any extent, and sweet corn and tomatoes to the same. I have a thousand things to tell you, but am so pressed for time that I have only one thought—which is how to carry out the day's programme without getting into positive disgrace with somebody. Papa enjoys himself, but is so utterly unable to get a moment for work of any sort that he does not even write a letter. He is distracted with engagements and longs for the peace of shipboard—think of that. We have a dozen large boxes to pack, and no end of belongings scattered about in all directions. If I could get all this *roba* out to Rome it would help to fill up the dear old barrack-palazzo. What do you think of Nice for a fortnight *en*

route? I long to hear about Miss Thesiger. Milnes Gaskell, how is he? . . ."

To which the following, of a few days later, may serve as postscript.

Mrs Story to her Daughter.

"Boston, *Aug.* 17*th.*

. . . "I thought that my visit to America would be the means of uniting more firmly the family circle, but, alas! I fear we but sow the seeds of bitterness, for they are all jealous of the duration of our visits and fearful that we shall unfairly distribute our time and attentions. Often it is not where we *would* go, but where we must, imperiously dictated by the powers that be. I do not see how we can possibly squeeze into our remaining days one-half of the visits we have accepted, and these are not a tenth part of our invitations, the greater number having been on the instant declined. As we were sitting on the lawn yesterday afternoon at Elm Hill, watching the game of croquet, Mr Sumner drove up with Laurence Oliphant, who had arrived that very morning in the steamer. They stayed some time and then we drove into town with them. Mr Oliphant leaves to-day for Newport, and Papa has given him some letters to friends there."

This next more definitely places itself.

Mrs Story to her Daughter.

"New York, *Nov.* 17*th*, 1882.

. . . "We have had the committee here, and they have discussed the monument to Judge Marshall, leaving it all to Papa's taste and genius. He is to go to Washington to select the site, but they wish him to be there during the session of Congress, so that his selection may be at once confirmed by the House. You remember well enough the whirl of a London season; this is like it for us, and I can never find time to write at ease. Some stray tired moment is all I can find, and the card-leaving, which must all be done in *person*, and the notes to be answered, and the lists, very complicated, to be kept without mistake of time and place, give me more than enough to do. At the weddings and afternoon tea-parties the fine clothes surprise me. I have never seen such gorgeousness on such small occasions. We saw at Mrs Paran Stevens's on Sunday night the *jeunesse dorée*, and it reeked—one half of it—of Worth. Young ladies, 'buds' they call them, in sleeveless gowns! Mrs —— is not a success either as an actress or as a beauty. Of the latter they have scores of a superior brand. The

climate is at this time very trying—one day Siberian, the next tropical, and the rest the worst kind of heavy scirocco. We die over the heat of the houses, and the hotels are suffocating."

One of Story's professional concerns during this sojourn was the question of the site, at Washington, for the monument to Chief-Justice Marshall, for which he had accepted the commission a year or two earlier. This work, placed in position in 1884 and, as the pedestal records, "Erected by the Bar and the Congress of the United States," has, in a high degree, the mass and dignity prescribed by its subject, and the great legal worthy, seated aloft, in the mild Washington air, before the scene of his enacted wisdom, bends his high brow and extends his benevolently demonstrative hand in the exemplary manner of the recognised sage and with all the serenity of the grand style. I find a letter from the Librarian of Congress informing the author that the work was on May 10th "unveiled with appropriate ceremonies"; and with this communication connects itself that of an eminent Washington friend who writes to him immediately after the proceedings. "You have a right to be proud of the admirable work, as I am for you. The image is fully up to the

greatness of the original, and that is enough to say, for he was one of the really great Americans of his time." The spring of the previous year had meanwhile seen due honour rendered to the bronze image of Joseph Henry, revered in American science and long the animating genius of the Smithsonian Institute — the Professor Henry whose name, I cannot here forbear to record, thanks to a former family connection with the bearer of it (the connection, remembered, cherished, anecdotic, on the paternal part, of grateful pupil with benignant tutor), had had for my early years such a suggestion of mysterious greatness as inevitably determines now, to my fancy, the character of the memorial. "This is the week of the annual meeting of the American Academy of Science," writes another Washington friend in April, 1883—a friend whose name would figure again one of our "shades," a shade of old Newport days, could our shades still be pursued. "Its members and magnates were all present," Mr Alexander Bliss continues, "as well as the officials of State, all the Judges, the Senators, and all the Members in town. The President only was absent—he being, as the papers will have told you, fishing in Florida. The day was bright and joyous, and the bronze eyes of the good old *savant* first saw the light amid the

budding trees of his own Smithsonian, in its fresh spring garb. The Misses Henry are thoroughly satisfied, as they will doubtless report to you. Chief-Justice Waite was rather the presiding genius of the occasion, making the address at the actual dropping of the veil." I turn over light mementoes, of pleasant suggestion, of this Washington winter, invitations to dine at the White House, "to meet H. E. the Govr.-Genl. of Canada," lady's dinner-cards, relics of such banquets, with the names and the order of each of the thirty-six guests, courteous requests from high officials—a list of eminent signatures—for a hearing of the lecture on Michael Angelo already elsewhere delivered and eventually published in the "Excursions." The particular pleasantness of Washington still abides in these reminders, giving out, for any initiated sense, a faint fragrance as of old dried rose-leaves; so fast, as we feel in the American air the pulse of change, does even a comparatively recent antiquity take on, with faded flowers and ribbons, with superseded performers, "the tender grace of a day that is dead." I should call up ghosts indeed were I here to be beguiled into any reference to my own handful of impressions of the American federal capital more than twenty years ago.

I find myself doubtless better employed in noting two or three occasions, belonging to the previous period, that had still served, for Story, as opportunities of intercourse with his own country. His bronze statue of Colonel William Prescott, who survived, heroically, the battle of Bunker Hill, was set up, on the anniversary of that day in 1881, in the immediate presence of the existing monument. I find it noted that, modelled in the Roman studio, the features of the young colonial general, as to which documents were not abundant, had been visibly inspired by those of the artist's friend Arthur Dexter, Prescott's great-grandson. Mr Robert C. Winthrop, who delivered the elegant address that accompanied the unveiling of the image, alludes to Story's presentation of the hero "in the light banyan coat and broad-brimmed hat which he is known to have thrown on in the intense heat of the day and the battle, in exchange for the more stately and cumbrous uniform in which he had marched from Cambridge the night before and which may be seen dropped beneath his feet. His eagle gaze," this speaker continued, "is riveted with intense energy on the close-approaching foe. With his left hand he hushes and holds back the impetuous followers who are to await his word; with his right he

is about to lift the sword that is to be their signal for action"—the sword still preserved, for us, at a distance, in that literary commemoration given it by Thackeray, who relates in the opening passage of "The Virginians" that he had seen it crossed with another, the weapon carried by an ancestor on the Tory side, over the chimney-piece of the soldier's grandson, the historian of Mexico and Peru. The lecture on Michael Angelo, just mentioned, brings back to me the remembrance of one of Story's later and more interspaced visits to London—an impression with which the presence of Lowell is much mingled—and the somewhat blurred vision in particular of the beautiful great room of a generous house facing the Marble Arch, in which, one summer afternoon, a host of distinguished people gathered to listen to the lecturer. The latter's compendious tribute to the supreme sculptor-painter, which may now so conveniently be read, had all the interest and eloquence that his special authority could give it, but I seem to have preserved from the scene much less the sense of the address itself, and of the points made in it, than that of a fine, a delightful illustration of one of the great London fashions. This fashion, at the height of the "season," with so wonderful a rush, was to slip in a slice of

Michael Angelo, or of any other cold joint from the sideboard of the higher life, between three and four o'clock, between the copious lunch and the drive to Hurlingham, the impending private view, the garden-party out of town, the tea-party at home, between the jaws in fine, powerfully made to gape, of the gorged afternoon, and to have available for each of these sequences the same unperturbed blandness. The occasion was thus surrounded, amid the courtesies and splendours of the house, with the rustle and fragrance and shimmer that were the mark of great entertainments, so that one could freely admire, in the rich and artful light, that triumph of good manners which consists in the mastery of such signs of attention as will serve for any one social object as well as for any other, such attestations of presence as will almost represent a felt relation. Not one of these had been wanting for one of the auditors who afterwards walked westward, southward, over the green stretches of the Park, to Kensington; and yet what was mainly striking to him, as I say, was not the stuff of the lecture, to which he was to do justice in the future, but the brilliant, graceful, successful comedy of all the rest of the matter. Which view of the case may be noted, moreover, without prejudice to any one concerned. The act of homage, all

round, was an act of aspiration, of noble yearning amid dire distractions, and the sculptor's—that is Story's—florid Sardanapalus throned in one of the rooms.

A demonstration of a simpler strain had meanwhile doubtless been the delivery at Salem, Massachusetts, in 1878, of the Ode addressed by Story to the memory of the founder and first Governor of the province, John Endicott, the anniversary of whose landing on the site of the present city, September 18th, is kept from half-century to half-century.

> "I send my voice from far beyond the sea;
> Only a voice—and therefore fit to be
> Among the dim and ghostly company
> That, from historic realms of shadowy gloom,
> And from the silent world beyond the tomb,
> This day shall come, their living sons to greet
> With voiceless presence, and with noiseless feet,
> To join the long procession in the street,
> And listen to the praise
> Of the old deeds and days
> That in our memories evermore are sweet."

Incorrigibly absent and, from the native point of view perhaps, sadly Romanised, the poet invokes with evident sincerity, and with all due lyric dignity, the traditions and the personal memories of his younger time—rejoicing in his task more-

over if only for the occasion given him poetically to greet his father.

"Dearest to me, and first of all the throng
That slowly moves along,
Is one belovèd form, with face benign,
Whose birthday fell on the same day as thine,
Oh pleasant town of mine!
'Tis the great Jurist, all his features bright
With an irradiating inner light."

He warms again, as he fixes it, in his alien air, to the picture of his New England boyhood and the renewed voice of its attendant spirits.

"They peer from every window-pane,
From every alley, street and lane
They whisper on the air.
They haunt the meadows green and wide,
The garden-walk, the riverside,
The beating mill adust with meal,
The rope-walk with its whirring wheel,
The elm grove on the sunny ridge,
The rattling draw, the echoing bridge;
The lake on which we used to float
What time the blue jay screamed his note,
The voiceful pines that ceaselessly
Breathe back their answer to the sea."

And then, with this note, he recalls, as the richest treasure of the time, that breath of outlandish ports that was borne home, for watchful young

senses, by the tokens, so early to shrink, of great sea-traffic.

"Ah me, how many an autumn day
We watched with palpitating breast
Some stately ship, from India or Cathay,
Laden with spicy odours from the East,
Come sailing up the bay!
Unto our youthful hearts elate
What wealth beside their real freight
Of rich material things they bore!
Ours were Arabian cargoes, fair,
Mysterious, exquisite and rare;
From far romantic lands built out of air
On an ideal shore;
Sent by Aladdin, Camaralzaman,
Morgiana or Badoura or the Khan;
Treasures of Sinbad, vague and wondrous things,
Beyond the reach of aught but youth's imaginings."

With Browning, in these later years, his correspondence ceased to be frequent, not from any diminution of friendship, but because of their opportunities for meeting, eventually more repeated, in particular through Story's multiplied excursions to England. Other chances than these latter, moreover, came up; autumn weeks in Venice—the rigid limit, for so long, of any movement of Browning's toward Florence, and the August and September days in which Switzerland, year after year, made them more or less neighbours. The high places, for the

annual absences from Italy and from England, called them both, and the Storys, from early in the eighties, had become, as I have mentioned, "braced" proprietors in the Engadine. My shrunken collection of documents yields, however, a remnant or two, at contact with one of which I find association promptly waking up.

Robert Browning to W. W. Story.

"29 De Vere Gardens, W., *July 19th*, 1888.

"My dear Story,—I had just telegraphed to Dulwich that I should be unable, to my great regret, to go there this morning, when your message comes—still more adding to my regret. I have a vile cough, and a general sense of indisposition which quite prevent my attendance on an occasion which I think will interest you—as it used to do in my case. Ever affectionately yours, Robert Browning."

"As it used to do in *my* case," too, the author of these notes is almost emboldened to subjoin, remembering old summer afternoons when the *consigne*, among the children of light—which was a fair description of the favoured friends of the then Governors, Mr Charles Roundell and the Rev. William Rogers, Rector of St Botolph's, Bishopsgate—was the annual reception at Dul-

wich College. Even though, as I hope, these hospitalities still take place for new generations, I view them, afar off, in a mellow social light which is one with the sweet-coloured glow of the long picture-gallery of that fortunate institution, a vista of Dutch and other of the minor masters, looking down upon tables of tea and of heaped strawberries and ices, upon smiling pilgrims from town, amiable women and eminent men, upon hosts as genial as their background of treasures, upon individuals and couples detached and absorbed, preferring eagerly the precious pictures even to the strawberries, nowhere else so big, upon high doors opened, to the ripe afternoon, for adjournment to beautiful grounds. With which, but for the fear, under the touch of Browning's note, of waking up to excess, I should trace my association, as I have called it, further still, suffer it to pursue my second-named of the Dulwich dispensers, much-doing, much-enduring and all-beneficent and delightful man, to the sober shade (as I reconstitute it) of the Bishopsgate parsonage, to the small and intimate dinner, exactly, that, both for company and for cheer, one felt as of the sound City tradition—the City familiar and at home; with the high political world, with even the Bank, made human, made charming, fairly seated

opposite and speaking in a voice as pleasant as the ring of new-minted money.

I turn over still another of Browning's letters —not addressed, this one, to either of our friends, but to their daughter, whom he had known from childhood and who had sent him, in the summer of 1884, the translation she had lately made of the Autobiography of Giovanni Dupré, the so interesting Tuscan sculptor. "It is not so very 'little' an affair; and, in the fear that, when my sister has finished it, I may have to begin my own reading, and end it so late as to lead you to suppose that either book or letter has gone wrong; on *this* account I write at once to thank you most heartily. My sister says the Autobiography is *fascinating:* I can well believe it, for I never knew such a work to be without interest, and this of Dupré must abound in precisely the matters that interest me most. . . . When I have thoroughly gone through the book I will write again, if you permit me—as I know your old memories will be indulgent in the case. There is not much likelihood of our going to Italy this autumn; the silly quarantine regulations [against cholera] effectually hinder our attempting that: and in no case should I—probably—trust myself again in Florence. Yet such an event *might* be; and

if you are within reach you will be certain to see the old friend who always rejoices when he hears of your wellbeing and trusts it may continue." And I go on—not for the special weight of the words, or for any close relevancy in their reference; rather merely to feel this last link in my hand as long as possible. "Pen is very well; at Dinant, just now, painting landscape in the open air. I have told him already of the book, which I know he will delight in reading. I am occupied this very day in sending his statue of Dryope to Brussels, where the Exhibition will give it a chance of being judged by better knowledge than is found here. Your own brothers' works are capital—Julian's picture at the Grosvenor admirable in many respects and above the works on each side of it. Waldo's statuette is exceedingly good also; they have, each of them, enjoyed a better education than is easily obtainable here. My sister sends her kindest love to you. We are ordered to find mountain air for her and must somehow manage it; but our Gressoney in the Val d'Aosta is a barred paradise at present; Switzerland is our resource, I suppose. What do you think? We get this moment a word from your mother to say she—or 'we'—may be seen in town this day only, as she

leaves early to-morrow. I shall contrive to call this evening, and will keep my letter open to make it worth your reading by my news. Their plan is to go somewhere for a week or two's refuge from the heat, and thence, returning to London, get to Rome as soon as the difficulties on the frontier are removed."

There were other meetings after this, but my only other records are half a dozen notes, of the autumn of 1889, from Mrs Story in Rome to her daughter in Florence. "We have had a week of such emotions that I have been much upset, and, having had to write so much, have not had a moment for you. Browning is lying dangerously ill at Palazzo Rezzonico. Write at once to Pen—it will help him to hear from you. I have letters and telegrams every day, but they are very disheartening, and I fear the worst. His heart is very weak and he is seventy-five. His admirable constitution and temperate life are greatly in his favour. Still, I despair. I cannot tell you how we rejoice to have seen him so lately at Asolo, when he was so well and in such force, brilliant and delightful as ever. Mrs Bruce's death was a terrible shock to us all, and Uncle James's state, though not worse, gives me profound anxiety." Mrs Bruce, gentlest of ladies, who had retired, in ill-health,

from the service of her Queen, and whom I remember as presented, in alternation, against the background of the old Barberini drawing-room and her own, of the homelier note, in grey St James's Palace, was a friend of many years and a regular participant in the Roman winter. "Uncle James" was the title conferred by long intimacy upon J. R. Lowell, at this time under the shadow of the illness which was to lead, somewhat more than a year later, to his death. The happy days at Asolo had been spent by the Storys under the roof of their supremely amiable countrywoman, Mrs Arthur Bronson, long resident at Venice, but devoted to the little hill-town immortalised (as we must verily say) in "Pippa Passes," which, from under its ruin-crested *rocca*, looks out across the purple plain to Bassano, Padua, Vicenza, other places, other names, charged with memories. Here, beside the "gate" where our friends had seen their last of Browning, also a visitor tenderly protected by her, she had established one of the quaintest possible little places of *villeggiatura*—the gate being the empty arch of one of the old town entrances, a barrier long since humbly removed, to match with all the other final humilities, and the house itself resting half upon the dismantled, dissimulated town-wall. No sweeter

spot, in all the sweetness of Italy, could have offered itself to old Italianised friends for confident renewals and unwitting farewells.

The note I have just quoted from Mrs Story had its inevitable sequel. "Our dearest Browning died last night at ten o'clock in Venice. I think you can help poor Pen, who wants to have his father buried at Florence beside his mother. Get Simone to intercede with the authorities and telegraph yourself to Pen at the Rezzonico." And again on the morrow: "We are utterly prostrated by our loss and grief. His last words to us, as he stood at the gate at Asolo, having bade us a most tender farewell, were 'We have been friends for over forty years without a break.' I knew not how to break the news, when it came, to dear Papa, but I waited, in the evening, till he had eaten some dinner, and then, in a quiet moment, I told him. He spent the evening in tears and in talking about him and the old time. What can we say or do? How golden seem the memories of those rich days and hours with him at Asolo! How grateful are we for this comfort, and how nearly I had missed it! I feel sure that if he expressed any wish it must have been to be buried beside his ever-beloved wife at Florence. No Westminster Abbey could

in his loyal heart have had an allurement to be named beside that dear Florentine grave. I hope you and Simone may be able to help to this end. . . . His new book of Lyrics was to have been published yesterday! But how dreary cold looks life to-day! The loss of him is beyond words a blow to us." After which a final line expresses, as the sense of our friends, a preference coloured by their attachment to Italy. "I now hear from Venice that Browning is to be buried in London, in the Abbey. I am sorry; one feels it so much more suitable that he should lie in Florence and beside *her*. But I suppose the stupid authorities would not, after what they have done, permit the intramural burial. What a mistake to have forfeited such an honour and glory to Florence! There is to be a service to-day at the Rezzonico." All visitors to Venice remember the imposing palace of that name, one of the creations of a late and no longer superstitiously "sincere" period, which, with its wide florid front, all staged and pillared and embossed, commands a bend of the Grand Canal and, like certain others of its company, reminds one, from the low level of the gondola, of some broad-breasted mythological sea-horse rearing up from the flood with the toss of a sculptured crest and with emergent knees figured by the water-steps.

To this stately temple of the rococo, admirable in its order and which had become the property of his son, the author of "Men and Women" was to bequeath the association most interesting for ourselves. Only, the association remains, through the years, as may be said, scarce assimilated, slightly discordant—an impression (the impression of the strange short ways life and death are apt to take with us) not dispelled by the beautiful, cold, pompous interior, partly peopled though the latter be, in its polished immensity, by every piously-kept relic of Casa Guidi and of London years. For all his "difficulty" Browning was, with his lovers, the familiar and intimate, almost the confidential poet, fairly buttonholing the reader with the intensity of his communication and the emphasis of his point. The Italy of the Rezzonico was not, in spite of "A Toccata of Galuppi," the Italy we felt and cherished in him—not a place consonant with the charged messages I speak of, but the suggestive scene, much rather, of emptier forms and salutations, conventions and compliments. After which it may doubtless be added that we are ever ill-advised to challenge, on behalf of a mortal memory, any benefit whatever of chance, any object with a power to preserve, to mark a passage through the sands of

time. Let us put it that the Rezzonico, even though all mirrored in the Adriatic channel, rises above these sands very much as the Sphinx or the great Pyramid rises above those of the desert. The travellers of the future will not trouble about shades of affinity when the gondolier of their day, coming on from the Rialto and the Mocenigo toward the palace of the Venetian Pope, pronounces, mispronounces, with his hoarse, loud cry, the name of the English poet he has learned to add to those of Shakespeare and Byron.

Browning's death, for our friends, was to make that of Lowell, which took place a year and a half later, the more of a loss. They had found Lowell in London from time to time, while he occupied the post of American Minister, and then again during the years, signally interesting to a near observer of them, as I am impelled to say, that saw him regularly reappear as a visitor, indifferent to the rigour of custom in such cases, on the scene to which his official period had so deeply attached him. It was the situation made for him by this lasting attachment that was interesting in the degree I mention—interesting to a fellow-countryman who often found occasion to rejoice that his own predicament, in the same air, was comparatively simple; though indeed

it may be added that the personage in question sometimes felt a kind of cruelty in his comparative independence. London, when she takes the trouble to bite at all, bites deep, and one who had himself been bitten inevitably watched with attention such other marks of the teeth as met his view. They had entered Lowell's life sharply enough, but he had the inconvenience, I think, of not being quite free to confess to the wound. As he was representative, and his representative character stuck to him, so he was responsible—which created elements of situation that rather failed to hang together. Speaking of it, I mean, as his last period made it, he was, while unofficial, too distinguished a stranger to be private, and yet was too private to have been "sent"; which latter fact in turn spoiled a little the harmony between his theory and his practice. His theory was that of the American for whom his Americanism filled up the measure of the needful; his practice was that of freely finding room for any useful contribution to the quantity from without. The best account of his inconsistencies would doubtless be that they were for no one more "funny" than for himself, who could always moreover, for occasion, make the funny funnier still. To which recollections, however, I can do no justice in a glance by

the way. I am afraid that what is easiest to express in them is the observer's near "subjective" and perhaps too imaginative sympathy; something like a resentful vision of the way in which those who sacrifice to great democracies and sovereign peoples, occupying in their service what are called "high posts," are apt all too soon to become the sport of fate, the victims of a fleeting hour. With limited philosophy perhaps, but with lively sensibility, one deplored, on behalf of one's admirable friend's distinction, all his high quality, the rudeness of the political game that could so take and leave, so want and yet so waste him. It was a question of "treatment," of his having been, as it were, almost more abused than used. And the fact that it was the System but made the case worse; it would have shown as less ugly had it been a rare accident. So, at any rate, before the spectacle, in London, of other ordered ways, and doubtless fantastically enough, one contrasted the luxury of the European "career" with the mere snatched dignity of the American—indulging really in wanton wishes that ever so many things might have been different, and profiting by the licence of friendship to dream extravagant dreams. These were but the melancholy air-castles of fond, disinterested fancy. Neither participant

in the relation I thus recall could possibly have so discriminated for himself.

But I must not multiply words over the too few remaining lines in my boxful of letters that have a connection here. I find scarce more than a note or two, the earliest of which in date belongs to March 5th, 1885. It is from the house in Lowndes Square that he occupied during his diplomatic term, and refers to the death of his second wife, three weeks before. "I had had a letter to you on my conscience for a good while but never found a time when moods and leisure made it possible. I little dreamed that when I wrote it would be within these black boundaries. I cannot yet say," he presently adds, "what my own plans will be. I suppose that there is little doubt that some one will be sent to take my place here. But I cannot now go back to live at Elmwood as I hoped. Probably I shall stay here for the present, as I took on my house till the end of the year. . . . I cannot say enough of the kindness and sympathy I have received here. Lady Lyttelton especially has been as a sister. It has done me all the good that can be done —and that *is* something. I thank you and Emelyn, dear old friend, as you know, but find it hard to say what I would *as* I would. God

bless you both, and keep you together!" After which comes another scrap, of June 2nd, 1887, again from London, but during a friendly visit. Story was about to go to Oxford to receive the honour of a D.C.L. degree. "I am delighted to hear that Oxford is to do for you what she ought to have done sooner. It will be no addition to you, but a very sensible one to me, since it will give me the chance to see you again. I won't say we are getting old, but we are getting *on*, and every milestone is nearer to the inevitable twilight. . . . Let me know also the date of Commemoration, that I may go down with you to say *Placet*. I will keep the day open. London is unhappy just now with the eternal Irish indigestion, but I still find it pleasanter than any other place in the world. I who lived a hermit so long and found my burrow delightful, find the sense of enormous human neighbourhood here comfortable in my old age. It shelters me from the wind. . . ." Which makes the right place for the following.

W. W. Story to his Daughter.

"16 Half Moon Street, *July 8th*, 1887.

. . . "The heat here has been most exhausting—I never knew it hotter in Rome; and we long to get out of the turmoil of life into some

quiet. By the end of next week we shall in all probability leave for St Moritz. Mama is trying to arrange here about furniture, but the heat is so great that she can do very little. Our Oxford experience was very pleasant; we stayed at the Deanery (Christ Church), and the Dean and Mrs Liddell were extremely kind and did everything for us. I appeared in my red gown and college cap, and was warmly received and cheered by the undergraduates in the college theatre. In the afternoon we had a charming garden-party, where all the Oxford world was, with bands and glees and part-songs and a collation under a great tent; and we wandered about by the water and under the trees till twilight, when I went to a great banquet in C. Ch. Hall, and sat on the dais, in my red gown, with the Dons and Doctors. There were speeches, of course, and toasts, and though I had been assured that I should not be called upon, another Dr having been appointed to answer for the new Drs, yet when he sat down there was such a shout and call for me that I was obliged to get up. I hope it was not disgraceful. We also attended an open-air representation of 'As You Like It' in Worcester College grounds, which was most interesting and delightful. The actors were from London and the whole effect charm-

ing. . . . The Jubilee procession (in London) was remarkable and effective, though the intervals between the different bodies were altogether too long. The conduct of the crowd was what surprised me most. They patiently waited for hours under the burning sun—some of them from 2 o'clock in the morning till 12 noon—without riot or confusion. And when the royal cortége passed there were universal cheers that split the air, a great spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm and loyalty. After that it is no use for Gladstone to talk of masses as opposed to classes. We saw the procession from Lord Rothschild's as it went down and from the Becketts' as it returned."

This was a period of interesting University episodes, for Story was in the following year invited to represent his own Alma Mater at the great commemorative celebration of Bologna, in respect to which he writes to his wife on June 12th. Lowell, it may be mentioned, was another of the Harvard deputies, but, on the scene of action, had been taken inopportunely ill and was most of the time confined to his hotel. "We had a *fiaccolata* of the military last night, which we saw admirably from our balcony, with various friends of the Covaglia family. It was

really splendid: each man carried a tall framework of coloured lamps, red, green, yellow, representing stars, flowers, towers, and producing an uncommonly splendid effect. They all filed down Piazza Galvani on which this house fronts, and turned our corner, so that far away on both sides we saw them coming and going. Immediately afterward I dressed for the Royal reception at the Prefettura, and went at 10. The Queen most gracious, and asked particularly for you; shook hands with the King." All of which brilliancy appears to have been, in some degree, a medal with a reverse—as I gather at least from a very concise diary kept by Story at the time. On June 10th, the day after his arrival from Rome, "Went to the University to get programme and orders. Such a confusion in all the arrangements I never saw; more of the names on the list wrong than right, and the printed list full of the most ridiculous mistakes —South America coming under the head of Canada, and New Jersey appearing as an independent republic with the designation 'Neo-Cesarensis.' My own name was on no list and I was obliged to write it down myself. . . . Lowell in wretched quarters and very unwell, and all the American deputation irritated at the want of recognition and the confusion of every-

thing." It was Story's fate, in the various processions, to be consigned, insistently, to the South American section; after which, on his finally protesting that the United States were on the northern continent, the error was rectified. "Ah, then, you must go under Australia!" And the last words are that Carducci, alas! was dull, and that the heat was suffocating.

I give in this connection the last words I find from Lowell.

J. R. Lowell to W. W. Story.

"ELMWOOD, CAMBRIDGE, MASS., *October 2nd*, 1890.

"MY DEAR WILLIAM,—It was very pleasant to see your well-remembered handwriting again, and to see it without any hint of that quaver in it into which the hand as well as the voice is betrayed by the accumulating years. I say this not in malicious sympathy, but as a respectful tribute to your seniority—it isn't great, to be sure, but at our time of life even ten days have a value of which youth could not conceive.

"But why do I talk of old age, I in whom autumn (of all seasons of the year) has renewed my youth? I was seriously ill last winter and spring, even dangerously so, I believe, for a day or two, and all summer have been helplessly languid and inert. Not that I didn't feel much

as usual in body, but my mind had no grip, 'couldn't seem to catch hold,' as our vivid American phrase puts it. And my memory fumbled in vain when it tried to pick up anything smaller than a meeting-house. But all of a sudden ten days ago I got up in the morning a new man. My memory still boggles a little about dates, but, as well as I can make out, I am about fifty. . . . I am here in my birthplace and I find it very gracious to me. I look upon the trees and fields I first saw and find them as good as then. . . . I still have elbow-room, but I am more and more persuaded that the new generation shouldn't be allowed to start till the old be off the stage. It would save much unseemly hustling and many heartburnings. It is very good of you to tempt me with Rome and the Barberini, but, setting aside any scruples I might have as an American about living in a palace, I am anchored here for the winter. . . . Then too, if I am well enough, I am to read over again some old lectures in Philadelphia, for it pleases me to earn a little money in this way and convince myself that my hand can still keep my head. I shall send you one of these days a little book to which I have written a preface, and which will have the value of being at once pretty and scarce—250 copies printed for a club.

It isn't much of a preface, but a good deal of a book, being Milton's 'Areopagitica.' . . . Though I cannot come now, I am not without hope of seeing you in Italy again before I vanish. A longing has been growing in me for several years now, chiefly, I confess, for Venice, but with subsidiary hankerings after Rome and Florence. Neither of them is the old one, of course, but they are better than anything else. But it grows harder and harder for me to get away. For reasons into which I need not enter, but which are imperative, I am not my own man so much as I should like to be, and as I expected to be, in my old age. For better or for worse one is married to duty, and one mustn't dally with other baggages."

The history of our friends' closing years is not, it will be perceived, a chronicle of events. Life continued largely serene for them, inflicting no deep wounds and making no cruel demands; the golden air, as we have called it, was never really darkened for them, nor the spell of old Rome broken. Story worked bravely on, from year to year, meeting as he could the conditions, often, inevitably, the reverse of inspiring, involved in the appeals reaching him for monuments to American worthies—making, that is, the best

of the dire ordeal of the sculptor fighting for his idea, fighting for his life, or for that of his work, with an insensible, an impenetrable, a fatal committee. To 1869 belongs his London statue, that of George Peabody, massive, yet human, seated, by the Royal Exchange, where the sound of quick feet, on sharp City errands, most abounds; but much of the later time was occupied with the most elaborate of his productions in the public order, the large memorial to Francis Scott Key, author of "The Star-Spangled Banner," presented to the city of San Francisco by her so largely munificent son Mr James Lick. Looking out to the Golden Gate of the Pacific, uplifted on a pedestal embossed with a frieze of reliefs, and surmounted with a canopy which itself carries further aloft a colossal statue of America partly enshrouded in the folds of the flag, this image, probably precious beyond any other in the world as an example, on the part of the originating body, of the sense of proportion defied, must have represented, on the side of the artist, the sharpest of inward, the queerest of æsthetic, struggles. There is always, fortunately, for the strained consistency of the sculptor so confronted and so divided, an efficient salve in the consciousness that though his work may not do, or undo, what he would like, it is

still at least preventive in respect to worse misdeeds. A colossal statue to Mr Key demands a particular perspective, but what perspective would have been possible with, for instance, an uncompromising obelisk? Who can deny that the obelisk was possible, a landmark from afar for Pacific voyagers? We may dream at any rate that Story averted the obelisk. Echoes of these productive years, as well as of projects and possibilities that failed of effect, sound for me, here and there, in stray letters and other scraps of reminder. His impressive statue of "Jerusalem Desolate" paused, in London, in 1873, on its journey to America, and, being offered for a short time on view there, elicited the following.

A. W. Kinglake to W. W. Story.

"I went on Monday to see the Jerusalem, and was so fortunate as to find in the room a lady who knew me, who understood the glories of sculpture, and was in a state of enthusiasm about your great work. My appreciation of high Art has been so poorly cultivated that I was exceedingly glad to have her guidance. Her delight in the general conception alternated with admiration of the separate beauties. Pointing out for instance the arms, she taught me to

appreciate the power with which you have forced the cold marble to express glowing flesh. You must be very happy. The aspect I preferred to all was the one towards the left of the statue."

Story writes in 1886 to Mr Wurts Dundas in response to a proposal that he should enter the field as a competitor for the design of a monument to General Grant. "I had never supposed I should be thought of in relation to it, knowing as I do the strong pressure which would be made in many directions to obtain it, and having in this as in all other cases no intention to offer my services or to put forward any claim. As for competition, I have always steadily refused to enter into it. It requires a great deal of knowledge and experience to be able to decide upon models for a great monument, and the judging committees are generally incompetent." After which he enumerates, lucidly enough, the drawbacks and disasters involved in the process in question. "It is very easy," he adds, "to make a mistake in judging of a great monument from a small sketch. Effects are quite different in small from what they are in colossal proportions, and my own experience is that I have invariably found it necessary in the large to modify much that is fairly satisfactory in the

small." And more of the letter is worth quoting. "Various schemes have occurred to me; a triumphal arch, a portico, a tabernacle, or a far more grandiose and effective combination of all, with a great frieze in high relief representing all the distinguished coadjutors and generals of the War, or, round the portico, a triumphal, or even a funereal, procession of the same (in relief), with a colossal statue of Grant in the centre. Otherwise a mausoleum surrounded on the outside by such a procession, surmounted by America Victrix and with a colossal figure of Grant on a platform in front. I have in my mind such a combination, which it is impossible to explain in words—in addition to which my ideas are of course as yet but first impressions, and require much further consideration. . . . The monuments at Edinburgh and at Berlin to Scott and to Fritz are, as you mention, admirable in themselves, but I think that with unlimited money something more imposing than these ought to be produced. I am now making a monument to Francis Key, in which I have embodied some such general scheme as that to Scott at Edinburgh, though it is different enough. It consists of an open loggia or tabernacle on four Corinthian columns, standing on a base and surmounted by a statue of America with the

Flag. In the centre of the tabernacle is the statue of Key, and on the base a bas-relief of singers and players performing the song. I am very tired of the stale idea, so often repeated, of a monument with a portrait-statue on top and four figures at the corners of the base; it is the resource of all commonplace sculptors. What we want in this case is grand character, real interest, poetic conception. But I thoroughly agree with you that all violent action is to be avoided. It is always unhappy, in the end, however striking, often, at first sight. The idea of victory should be indicated not by any violence or energy in the figure, but in some big symbolic way, making the man the director and inspirer, not the physical actor. Grant never went about gesticulating wildly and crowing, but was remarkably quiet and sternly calm, the soul, not the body, of the War." Returning to the subject in another letter to the same correspondent, he gives his reasons for disapproving of an elaborate scheme of which some detailed account had been published, criticising it mainly as a feeble and confused attempt to arrive at mere size and quantity. What becomes, he asks, in such a mere material jumble, of beauty or of lucidity? "Such ideas did not animate the Florentines when Giotto built that exquisite campanile that

gives a grace and beauty to the whole city and is the delight of the world. The Washington monument in our national capital is double its size, and we may brag of it as the tallest obelisk in the world. But we must in honesty also add that it is the ugliest, unable to compete, for anything like beauty, even with many a factory chimney. As a monument to Washington it means absolutely nothing whatever. Think of the grand Mausoleum at Halicarnassus and of that to Hadrian at Rome, and then look at our *biggest* of all chimneys to the father of his country!"

In the "finds" of antiquity he would have been, by the mere habit of an old Roman, always interested; but they moved him, beyond this, so far as he could take cognisance of them when occurring elsewhere than at Rome, to special and individual emphasis of attention and judgment. A long letter to Mr Richard Greenough, of the spring of 1882, expresses the opinions he had promptly formed on the authorship of the beautiful Hermes then lately brought to light at Olympia. He is against the attribution of the work to Praxiteles, and thinks the evidence adduced for it "very lame on certain points. Of course it stands in the first place simply upon the curt statement of Pausanias,

and the immediate question is of the value of *his* testimony, even if this could be shown directly to apply. It seems always to be forgotten that he wrote his book towards the end of the second century of our era, that is at least 500 years after Praxiteles—in itself a very damaging fact." And he goes into the matter, for some eight pages, much further than we may follow him. "I am much disturbed, again, by the account of the execution of the hair, evidently merely blocked out and left unfinished or carelessly treated"—which launches him into much archæological learning and reasoning; interesting to us now mainly as evidence of his disposition, on all such questions, immediately to "rise." The rise, as we say, on behalf of his own opinion, could always promptly be obtained from him, with plenty of information and acuteness to support it. Nor may I follow him, further, through a correspondence maintained for many years with the late Sir Charles Newton, of the British Museum, interesting as the letters before me (Newton's own) may be held as communications of the results of the writer's archæological work, and as a series of answers. Yet I like not simply to brush by this valuable relation, which, beginning apparently in 1862, was to continue for years. "I read out your

'Leonardo' poem," he writes in 1864, "to my wife, who enjoyed it as a true artist should. If you will write a small volume of poems equal to this and the others you read me in Rome, I venture to prophesy that you will take rank among English poets when many now extolled are forgotten. I am vexed to think that I missed you at the Museum, and that we saw so little of each other here. I wanted particularly to have shown you the cast of Mausolus. And I have just received a wonderful collection of antiquities from Rhodes, among which is a cup with a figure of Aphrodite, on a swan of extraordinary beauty." With which, further, "Panizzi desires to be kindly remembered to you, and will you ask Tilton to relieve me of the custody of his pictures?" This last inquiry causes again a sad, faint wraith to walk a little; that is by the dim light of a further allusion, made the same year. "I find that Mrs Newton wrote to Lady Eastlake about Tilton's pictures, but Sir Charles has not yet been to see them. Lord Overstone saw the Claude and thought that £200 would be a fair price for it. Colnaghi thought that Tilton has greatly overestimated both pictures. Lord Somers saw the Claude yesterday and thought it was by a pupil of Claude's, of whom he also has a picture. But

he admired it." All of which brings back to my own recollection the little cherished Claude, thrown up to the surface in some small untraceable Roman convulsion, and the subject of high hopes, deferred, renewed, blighted, yet blooming again, on the part of Story's neighbour and countryman in the other wing of the Barberini. One had been present at revelations of the treasure—truly, in memory's eye, a delightful possession; one was sympathetically interested in its fortune, having the impression of all that was involved, and one at the same time embraced the case as almost romantically, quite "picturesquely" typical, by its general analogy with all the other cases (a class by themselves) of Italian *decaduti* looking for redemption from the surrender of an heirloom inordinately valued. The "Claude" was not an heirloom—was only a mysterious and charming acquisition, which, it is to be hoped, has since ceased its anxious wanderings and is comfortably placed; but the reminiscence is, as I say, quickened for me by the sense of this cold whiff of the irony of fate directed upon it from the faded note. The old London millionaires and connoisseurs round off the little drama.

Our friend's correspondent, at any rate, writes in the autumn of 1875 about another matter. "I

have consulted my colleagues, Mr Pincher, who is our new Assyriologue, and Dr Birch, and they tell me there is no portrait of Sardanapallos in Assyrian art, but that there are portraits of the king who was so designated by the Greeks. I send you by to-day's post a batch of photographs from our Assyrian sculptures. At the back of each is written the name of the king as Pincher reads it. I cannot tell you how the dress of these worthies was put on, but I hope to see you in Rome next month, when we will go into these matters with the photos. I leave for Berlin on the 10th (November) to see the cast of the Olympian statue (the Hermes)." Story was working at his great seated figure of the personage in question, for the "putting-on" of whose dress, as well as for the art of his reconstituted "swagger," this suggestion of research and of the invocation of learned aid establishes an interesting history. Let me add that I cannot drop the question of our friend's ever-lively disposition to fumble in odd corners of the past without mention of his so characteristic plunge, undertaken during a few idle weeks of summer, into the history of the town of Dieppe. It has been noted that he made a stay there in 1856, shortly after the death of his eldest boy, which led to his

betaking himself promptly, after his wont, to an exploration of the local archives. The knowledge acquired, the speculations provoked by these studies, bore fruit long afterwards in a copious monograph—"A Sketch of Dieppe and its Early Navigators, with their Discoveries in Africa, the Indies and America"—which was by a perverse fortune not in his lifetime to see the light. The perversity lies in its being before me in the proof-sheets of a conspicuous London periodical, under the care of the editor of which it was so far prepared for publication. It was then found too long, extending to more than even two numbers, so that, sacrificed at the eleventh hour, it exists for the present mainly as a striking illustration of the almost whimsically inquisitive side of Story's mind and of that element in him that his friends mostly greeted (with an affectionate enjoyment of it shared by himself) as the courage of his convictions. It had substantially become his conviction, in a word, during his Normandy summer, that the Dieppe mariners had discovered the New World, and that, by the great sailor Jean Cousin in especial, the laurel of Columbus was gravely menaced. The paper is full of curious facts, of a detailed investigation of evidence, of a computation of the probabilities, into which

I may not, at this point, enter. He builds up the vision that had come to him, at the end of September, with the dispersal of the crowd of bathers and idlers; he strolls along the shore while the history of the place takes hold of his imagination. "There is nothing between us and America but the wide expanse of sea; and, sitting on the pebbles and gazing out over the sea-horizon, the mind naturally goes back to the time when, perhaps on the very spot where we pause, once wandered Descaliers and Cousin, Braquemont and Parmentier, Ribaut and Dominique de Gourgues, Villegagnon, Cartier and Duquesne,"—the brave captains, in short, who first tried the unknown seas of the east and west. "As we sit here in quiet the long scroll of history unrolls before us its sorrows and adventures, its triumphs and defeats. Full of interest as these incidents are to all the world, they are, as we shall see, especially interesting to America, the discovery and colonisation of which is so closely linked with this port of Dieppe." If certain claims made for Cousin in the last century "can be substantiated, there is no doubt that he was not only the original discoverer of the new continent, but was also the first to double the Cape of Good Hope, and show the way on to the East Indian seas."

It is to this substantiation that Story, through a long and minute discussion, addresses himself, not indeed absolutely concluding but marshalling the presumptions in his hero's favour, and preparing the ground for a return, if possible, to his subject. He has perhaps left it a little suspended in the air. But I must quote, for the pleasure of it, his final paragraph—the pleasure, I say, in particular, because we catch him here in a generous inconsequence of feeling. It was not in all manifestations, it was rather in too few, that the genius of France, in general, appealed to him.

"One fact seems to me clear, and that is that the French were the pioneers of discovery in the south and east as well as in the west. The vaunted voyages of Spain and Portugal, which so vividly illuminate the pages of history, were in fact quite secondary to those of France. It was she who led the way by her energy, her enterprise and her daring, and of her early navigators none are entitled to take precedence of those who issued from the port of Dieppe. If, besides those whom we have named, and some whose deeds we have attempted to sketch, we pass along the coast beyond the limits of their little town, how large and brave an assemblage should we find—too large indeed for the

limits of so slight an essay as this. Their very names alone would testify to the constant connection of America and France, and strengthen the bonds which unite these two great nations. Scarce more closely connected with the later history of America are the names of Lafayette and Rochambeau, than with its earlier history those of Champlain, the father of New France, Cartier, De la Rocque, La Roche, Du Monts, Lescarbot, Poutrencourt, Saussaye, and Argall, and the already-named hardy captains of Dieppe and Rouen."

The little desultory diaries meanwhile, whether Story's or his wife's, are the record, through the revolving years, of the extremely peopled Roman life, and of ease and industry exempt, happily, from sharp interruptions. The anxieties and complications inevitable in all full lives take quite the minor place for the reader of the pleasant scroll, and the golden roof of Rome spreads with its noble span, and with an almost equal benignity, over the pleasures and the pains. The Roman names, as they recur, themselves brighten the page, which creates a wistfulness even when repeatedly beginning with "Scirocco, always scirocco!" Mrs Story is the more copious, but too concise and too intimate for quotation; with only here and there the detached Roman

note, as for instance "Our poor Cardinal Pecci lies dying in the room below, and I cannot receive"—a frustration made up for, visibly, on many another occasion when the names of visitors abound. "A dinner of forty-three persons in the studio above," Story notes on the Shrove Tuesday of 1892, "arranged by Marion Crawford and Waldo to celebrate the death of King Carnival. Great gaiety and many costumes—Marion as Mephistopheles and I as Cimabue. Dufferin and Lady D. and their daughters came in, and he made a very happy and graceful speech. It was really a jollification in the manner of old days. We had the whole English Legation and several of the French, besides Vitelleschi, Simone P. Lübke and more." After which, on April 30th: "The Queen (of Italy) with the Marchesa Villa-Marina came to the studio and stayed some three-quarters of an hour, mainly to see 'Nemesis,' which I have still kept in the clay. She was most kind and amiable, looking also at everything else, and surprising me by her remembrance of what she had seen previously. I went with Edith in the evening to a small musical reception at the Quirinal—some twenty to thirty persons, and a trio, sonata and quartet, the music all Beethoven's—where she was again most gracious." He had taken some time before

this date, largely for the use of his sons, a small rough shooting-lodge, the "capanna" of many entries, at Castel Fusano, and the note of Whitsunday in the same year records the day as exquisite and as spent there with several friends. "To bridge in carriage and then took boat and was punted along an hour, with the shore all alive with birds, who kept up a tremendous chatter. The sea enchanting and the coolness of the breeze quite life-giving. Found at the *capanna* Louise Broadwood and Maud, Reschid Bey and Waldo; after which presently took gun and roamed along the shore—to shoot but a solitary quail. Luncheon very gay, and when it was half over a sudden party of friends, the Marion Crawfords and (others). M. C. went off to walk alone with Mrs M., and they were gone all the afternoon. We punted again through the *stagni*, and the sunset was beautiful. The whole day delightful." This impression appears to have been renewed the following year (May, 1893). "The quails were abundant, but I was out of practice and shot but four. Waldo slept on the floor of the dining *capanna*, and the rest of us in the other. Dinner was jolly, and the evening not less, so that we were not in our beds till midnight. But we were up the next morning at five, and every one went

for quail. I got a few, but only shot for an hour. The others were out till luncheon, while I wandered, in the delicious air and the perfect day, along the beach. After luncheon we shot again, and Waldo admirably; so that we got in all some 100 birds. That night, it appeared, I for some reason talked Greek in my sleep, better, I hope, than I should have done awake. I didn't shoot next day—Wednesday, 10th—but walked and wandered again, and liked that better. Chigi came over on horseback, stayed to lunch and was very pleasant; after which we fired rifles at a tin target, but with success only for him and Waldo. I came back on Wednesday P.M., feeling as if I had laughed all the while, and also as if I had consumed (with the aid of the others) much wine and even much whisky."

In the midst of which gentle journalising turns up, with slight inconsequence, another page, still gentle, but referring to a date—January, 1886—considerably previous. "At work at Key's statue, which is well on. Alma Tadema called to see me, and was warm in praise of Salome and the second Cleopatra. How sincerely, however, who can tell?" On February 4th he was still engaged with Key. "But he is now all together and only needs superficial finish. Guthrie, Ren-

nell Rodd and Ralph Curtis to dinner. Shakespeare Wood died yesterday." A letter of Mrs Story's, of August 23rd, 1886, from St Moritz in the Engadine, mentions that, "As the weather promises to be fine, though we are under a fearful moon, we are to-morrow to lay the corner-stone of our Villa of the Future in honour of your birthday." And she adds on the morrow: "It all went off so well—the afternoon charming. We had asked every one, and Italians, English and Americans crowded alike about us with warmest wishes and felicitations. Every one admires the position. Papa had written a verse of dedication, which he read aloud, and a parchment was enclosed in a strong box in which, after the motto, were inscribed the names of all present. This was placed by me in the hollow of the corner-stone, and then by me plastered over. Then rose the singing voices of those who *could* sing (and even of some who couldn't!), and the glorious old Anthem 'Praise God,' &c., was re-echoed by the hills. Your health was drunk with three loud cheers; and then we had tea; after which Papa and I sat alone together on the logs. We believe more than ever in the place, and shall not be able to tear ourselves away before the middle of

September or even later." The house was in course of time built, solidly and spaciously, of rugged stone and on a perfect site, and, as a cool Alpine refuge after so many years of the Italian climate, was precious to them for the too few remaining years.

XII.

VALLOMBROSA.

A RESORT of briefer moments, meanwhile, had been the admirably placed summer home of their daughter, the high-perched Lago di Vallombrosa, in Tuscany, more than two thousand feet up from Pontassieve, in which, on October 31st 1893, they had celebrated their golden wedding (an occasion still present to me in the form of a goodly pile of notes and telegrams of congratulation), and in which, after his wife's death, Story's last days were to be spent. This immitigable loss overtook him in the spring of 1894 and, it may frankly be said, was practically his own deathblow. Mrs Story had been, in his existence, too animating and sustaining a presence to leave it, when withdrawn from it, unshattered—to leave it in fact, for its lonely nominal master, at all workable, or even tolerable. "She was my life, my joy, my stay and help in all things." So he writes to an

old friend in the summer of the sad year, and he expresses his case without reserve. "What is left seems to be but a blank of silence, a dead wall which, when I cry out—and I *do* cry out—only echoes back my own voice. I cry out Where is she? and no answer comes." To which the compiler of these notes, under the impression of the whole record, may be permitted to add his own sense of the admirable efficacity, as it were, of Mrs Story's presence in her husband's career—a presence indefatigably active and pervasive, productive in a large measure of what was best and happiest in it.

In sight here of the term of his own years I find myself aware of not having given him the benefit of two or three minor biographic facts—of the earliest in date of which, for instance, I meet this record.

Lord Arthur Russell to W. W. Story.

"Athenæum Club, *March 10th*, 1874.

"My dear Story,—I write in haste to inform you that you have been elected a member of this Club by the Committee, one of the 9 illustrious men who are annually chosen. The honour is very great, because the Committee must be unanimous and is composed of the first intellectual authorities in England—of whom

I am one! A single objection is fatal. Accept therefore my sincere congratulations. The first effect you will experience will be a demand for 37 guineas from the Secretary, 30 as entrance-fee and 7 for your annual subscription. But now you can scold the waiters and complain of the dinner, which you could not do properly when you were an invited guest. And you will have other privileges. I had an opportunity of seeing while I worked in your cause how many friends you have here. It was a great pleasure to me; and I am, with kind remembrances to Mrs Story—Yours sincerely,

"ARTHUR RUSSELL."

It was a less lasting advantage (besides being of a different order) that he was appointed in 1878 one of the United States Commissioners on the Fine Arts to the Paris Universal "Exposition" of 1878, after which he received the ribbon of the Legion of Honour—an opportunity for interest signally attenuated by the circumstance, expressed in his excellent and copious Report, that the American Government not only had failed to appropriate a fund "to enrich our country," in his words, "with treasures of art," but had doomed itself by its parsimony to make, in the case, a sadly insignificant figure.

"The small sum of 150,000 dols. actually appropriated to cover all expenses of every kind, was not only insufficient in itself, but was so tardily given as to render it impossible for America to make an exhibition worthy of a great country, not only in the department in the fine arts, but even in those of industry, commerce, machinery, manufactures, natural products and mechanical arts." What more nearly touched Story moreover was that, thanks to this meagreness of provision, American sculpture had no place and no representative. It was completely absent. "The expenses and risks incident to an exhibition of sculpture are of course far greater than those which are required for an exhibition of paintings, and had such an exhibition been determined upon, these would have fallen solely upon the sculptors themselves, some of whom were unable and some unwilling to bear them. Those whose reputations were already established had little desire to assume such burdens, with nothing to gain and everything to risk, while others who properly had a right to be represented had not the means." And he recalls the fact that "with most nations the department of the fine arts has ever been looked upon as the flower of their exhibition," the department repaying most, for effect and honour,

the expenditure of pains and money. He recalls in particular the grand style of the Roman Court in the London Exhibition of 1862, and may well be imagined to have inwardly contrasted his own so fruitful opportunity there with his excluded and eclipsed situation in Paris. The Report, however, is concerned with European work; with the effect, read over at this day (which is the effect, for that matter, of all Reports), of making the pensive contemporary live back into old sympathies and antipathies, old curiosities, admirations, mistakes. Such a document, as we turn it over, seems to consist half of the record of old, or even of young actualities that have since faded, and half of young, or even of old, obscurities that have since bloomed. Strange and sad the vision renewed for us of all the freshness that has now turned stale, all the earnest speculations that have lost their point. It is astonishing, in short, how soon such pages begin to strike us, on their critical side, as the mirror of an age less complicated, less initiated. Story himself had indeed — which is precisely what I am remembering here — other initiations and extensions, other activities of curiosity, on subjects to all appearance rather casually determined, that profit still for us by their concern with questions rather of science than of taste.

His inedited relics are numerous, and I find among them, for instance, a poem in blank verse, of many pages, bearing the title of "An Agnostic's Foolish Confession to his Friend the Priest"; which I should, I admit, more confidently refer to the class of meditations inspired by "science," were it not for the adjective that qualifies the supposed overflow. This is followed, however, it is further to be discerned, by a critical monologue, still in verse, from the priest himself, which shows us the abyss that, in spite of friendship, separates the pair, and from which we gather that the "foolishness" of the Agnostic is in having dreamed a bondman of the Church could understand him. Current criticism, had it had an opportunity to occupy itself with the pages in question, would certainly not have spared the author the irritation of the sage discovery that they offered an echo of the manner of Browning. And that imputation would probably have extended even to another composition, "An Author's View of Copyright" — a view of which, whimsically, blank verse is again the medium. If instead of "Author" Story had written "Poet and Sculptor," the whimsicality would rather more have hung together, making possible perhaps a reply, the other side, also

in verse, on the thesis that sculptors and poets have nothing to do with anything so sordid. But into the province of the unpublished, on our friend's part, I must not propose to penetrate. I leave aside, from that necessity, the Lecture on Art delivered by him repeatedly in the United States during the winter of 1877-78; just as, in the absence from my material of any correspondence or diary relating to it, I left the sojourn itself (made in company with his elder son) unmentioned in its order. The character of the performance in question, I take it, had been that of the talked *conférence*, animated, expressive, and in which the personality of the speaker counted for much in the success enjoyed, counted for more than half; so that mere verbal publication would have been a comparatively colourless record. My discrimination attaches better to his Study of "The Proportions of the Human Figure," to his "Mystery or Passion Plays," published in the "Blackwood" of December 1869, and best of all perhaps to a paper on "The Origin of the Italian Language" in "The North American Review" of January-February 1878 and two others on "The Pronunciation of the Latin Language" in the issues of the same periodical for March and April 1879. These disquisitions are, to the mere unlearned

sense, quite delightfully coloured by irresistible Italian sympathies—a remark which especially applies to the second and third. He inclines to the opinion, of which Cesare Cantù was at the time he wrote the most authoritative exponent, that—thrilling thought!—the Italian tongue is a survival and development of a language actually spoken, the *lingua rustica* of the Latin populations, as distinguished from their urban, and still more from their literary speech; and not a resultant of Transalpine influences wrought by invasions and migrations. In the articles on pronounced Latin he naturally therefore concludes in favour of the hypothesis based on analogy with this same far-descended Italian, and treats himself, as any human sense that has been Romanised through long years of the golden air infallibly must, to a luxury of reaction from the hapless subjection of the uttered phrase to the thin English scheme of sound. Story felt that an irresistible conviction on this matter was almost the result of any good talk—for how delightful and suggestive such talks might be no one knew better—with one of those brave, sane Romans of the people, deep-voiced sons of the soil, or of the City, whose words come out, one by one, with the distinction of classed coins in a museum-case,

and whose sentences stand up for the ear very much as an inscription on a triumphal arch stands up for the eye.

Old Italy, at all events, was never to have closed so beneficently round him as when the end approached. The end was already almost there by the time he had finished the only work that occupied him after the death of his wife. "I am making a monument to place in the Protestant Cemetery," he wrote to a relative in the spring of 1894; "and I am always asking myself if she knows it and if she can see it. It represents the angel of Grief, in utter abandonment, throwing herself with drooping wings and hidden face over a funeral altar. It represents what I feel. It represents Prostration. Yet to do it helps me." The figure thus produced, unsurpassed, in all his work, for intensity of expression, mingles the sincerity of its message now, for all time, as we may say, with that exquisite, soundless collective voice that nowhere hangs in the golden air with such a weight—resting here, so sensibly, straight upon the heart—as in that flower-smothered corner, beneath the time-silvered Pyramid, where Shelley's ashes supremely ennoble the interest and the passion of his verse, hauntingly, returns upon the beauty; the spot, in a word, at which the

mind never glances without some fine enjoyment of the fact, even some harmless triumph in it, that the place of sweetest sanctity in all Rome should so oddly chance to be dedicated to the great other, the great opposed faith. His studio closed, our friend spent the summer of 1895 with his daughter, in the Tuscan hills, as he had in the previous years paid her other visits. Relevantly to which — that is, to one of the interesting connections made present to him by her marriage—I may quote here the greater part of a letter that he had addressed to Madame Peruzzi, from the Baths of Ragatz, in October 1891.

. . . "I have thought of something which I hope may result in some benefit to you. It is a *grand peut-être*, but still it is a *peut-être* and I thought it worth trying. Mrs McClellan sent me an excerpt from some Italian paper containing a statement of the Bardi and Peruzzi claim for the loan made to Edward III., by means of which the battles of Crécy and Poictiers were fought, and on reading over this I wrote a long letter to Lord Hartington, setting forth the facts and saying that I could not but think that if the English Government were made aware of the state of things, and that this

Loan, large as it was, was never repaid, even in the smallest part, it would, or might, be induced to take some steps to recognise the debt, and if not wholly repay it (for *that* would be impossible), at least do something toward remunerating the Peruzzi for a loss which had been ruin to them. I endeavoured to urge him to bring the matter before the House of Lords, telling him that (as I had been told) such was the determination of the late Duke of Wellington, who was prevented from doing so by death. Perhaps, *chi lo sa?* he may do something, and then again he may not. But I thought that for your sakes I would at least make the attempt."

It is perhaps scarcely needful to add that the attempt has not, up to the present writing, been crowned with success. I meet, at all events, in an old scrap-book a reminder of Story's presence at Vallombrosa, on I know not which of many occasions, in the form of a little photograph of a pair of very animated interlocutors seated together, in light summer attire, under a spreading tree. One of the vivid talkers is, quite inevitably, Story; the other is, not *more* dramatically, Tommaso Salvini. The rare actor was a friend of the house and, whether in the

country or in Florence, a frequent visitor. Given Story's interest in the tricks of the great trade professed by the latter, it is visible that the pair of guests are, in the picture, discussing some question of interpretation, of scenic effect, from which the name of Shakespeare, constantly supreme with both, is not absent. How sharply present all such questions could be for Story is shown by his careful paper on some "Distortions of the English Stage," originally published in "Blackwood" and reprinted in his "Excursions." He there deals with the perversion of the characters of Macbeth and his wife as our theatre traditionally presents them, and uses much ingenuity—some of it I think misapplied—to show that, as the heroine of the play in which they figure, she is much more sentimentally interesting than we are accustomed to allow, and that, as the hero, the Thane of Cawdor is much less so. For the fashion of representing Lady Macbeth as bold and bad the magnificent personality of Mrs Siddons was, early in our age, responsible; she imposed upon us, by her great authority, a conception of the part quite at variance with a careful study of the text: which careful study places also in its true light the nature of her husband, whose assumedly rich mystic side, that of a man

struggling, amid dire temptations, with his soul and his conscience, it effectually dispels. One of the parties to the monstrous chain of crime is, in a word, all nerves and sensibility, all disinterested passion and exquisite anguish, while the other is all ruthless ambition, monstrous, mad, delirious, and thereby dishumanised. The paradox is pleasant enough, and is artfully supported, but the difficulty is that we scarce see how the interest of the play, and still more how the interest of any performance of it, gains by the contention. In proportion as the protagonist is fatuous, rhetorical and brutal (as Story insists), in that proportion do tragedy, poetry, sincerity, all his *general* significance, fall away from him, cutting off his moral connections and leaving him a mere ugly, bloody, abnormal case.

Be this, however, as it may, the collocation puts before me again another hour—an hour of the noble house in Via Maggio that was for the Storys the Florentine alternative to Lago—from which high ingenuity was as little absent. Meeting there the potent old actor who gratified graciously some of my curiosities, I was impressed by nothing so much as by *his* original view of a great Shakespearean passage. He held, his rich voice and grave face explained, that Lady Macbeth's walk in her haunted sleep

had been an incident originally attributed by the poet to Macbeth himself, and transferred from the latter's to the former's part either because the poet had yielded to the cajolery of a charming actress, or because some actress, vain and rapacious, had, early in the career of the play, laid such successful hands on the morsel that the abuse had become established. When it was suggested in response to this argument that the poor woman's mention of her "little" hand offered a difficulty, Macbeth's own bloody fist having been probably of normal size, the answer was, pertinently enough, that the word had of course been speciously put in (anything was possible in those times) by the performer herself. I remember well how little it could seem proper on this occasion to plead any such clumsy fact as that Mrs Siddons's remote predecessors had been, at the worst, but beardless boys. It is not, moreover, in any memory of contention that I invoke these charming or these mighty shades. My particular reminiscence was to remain with me as an interesting example of the sincerity of the artistic temperament. The admirable actor, conscious of the splendid use he would have made of the opportunity, had always so hungered and thirsted for it as to come finally to think of it as of a

right of which he had been deprived. One can surely but regret that he had not on some occasion supremely affirmed his sincerity by restoring the scene, at least experimentally, to his own part.

It is with the shades of Vallombrosa itself, those of the great Miltonic line, that we are directly concerned—the green density of which, and the soft murmur through all the summer months, make an undertone for our friend's short idyllic novel entitled "Fiammetta," composed in the course of an early visit paid to his daughter and published in 1886. This single piece of prose fiction produced by him with the exception of "A Modern Magician," which appeared in "Blackwood" in May 1867, contains an inscription to his wife and his hostess, recording that he had read it aloud to them "on three beautiful mornings as we sat under the shadows of the whispering pines. You thought well of it—too well, I fear—and encouraged me to print it. To you therefore I dedicate it, with my truest love and in memory of those happy summer days in the 'Etrurian shades.'" The tale, simple and sincere, lightly and easily told, is that of a maid of the mountains, the hills and woods there present, who, for a few weeks of inward ecstasy to herself, sits, by a pool in the forest, as model

to a young painter engaged on the picture of a naiad, and dies of her apparently unrequited love when the artist has, as the phrase is, no further use for her. Her mother, to the young man's knowledge, has had a misadventure, been seduced and forsaken, so that Fiammetta herself is a child of passion and despair; and this, with him, the fear of setting in motion a like doom, has been a reason for mounting guard on his conduct. He does so to such purpose that the wrong he has wished to avoid—or something practically as bad—springs directly from his desire for the right, and the ironic note, in the catastrophe, mingles with the tragic if we pause long enough to listen for it. Such pausing indeed perhaps is scarcely fair—it was clearly not, for us, the author's intention. Romantic, in imagination, to the end, Story saw his theme all sentimentally, and was content to leave it for the lightest of woodland elegies. The other light that plays in but plays for us as the gaps open and the patches mockingly flicker under the idle breath of analysis. Transpose the situation into a different tone, the tone of the real, we thus for convenience say, and we get a different meaning: the scruples of the youth, the yearning of the maiden, the rupture of the contact, the loss of the possibility, all so logically

produce it. He would have died, or almost, rather than not respect her, and what is fatal to her, at the end, is that she *has* been consistently respected. Which is the honest fashion, as I say, of turning it all about.

But the full voice of Vallombrosa is meanwhile in the author's charming monograph bearing the name of the enchanted place, originally published in "Blackwood," and reissued, as a volume of scarce more than a hundred pages, in 1881. Preceding "Fiammetta" by several years, it gave the first freshness of Story's impression. I am too conscious of the difficulty, I fear, however, of giving the first freshness of mine. That spur of the Apennines on which the convent visited by Milton stands in its shrunken but still impressive forest only welcomes the occasion to plant in the mind of a tourist submissive to Italy and addicted to long walks and long lounges one of the most romantic of Italian memories. Comparatively cockneyfied doubtless now, scarred and dishonoured by the various new contrivances for access without contact and acquaintance without knowledge, it was still, a few years since, a solitude tempered by hospitalities convenient enough and enlivened, as the Italian scene when sufficiently left to itself almost always is, by a natural elegance, the light stamp, everywhere,

of the grand style, the touch of the true Arcadian picture. Story describes better than I can do the charm alike of the "dense Etrurian coverts" and of the open, vertiginous views, as well as the aspect of the habitation to which he finally retired. "I had been invited by a friend to pass a few days with her and her family in one of the most lonely regions of the large tract which bears the name of Vallombrosa. The once famous convent lies at a distance of about three miles from this spot; and here, in one of the hollows, they had hired an old deserted house, built centuries ago by the Medici as a stronghold and hunting-box, which they had fitted up and put into habitable condition as a summer retreat from the heats of Florence. Originally the house was flanked by two tall towers, and was castellated in form; but within the last few years the present Government, caring little for the picturesque, and apparently seeking rather to obliterate than to preserve the traces of the past, had ruthlessly and for no sufficient reason levelled the two towers and raised the upper storey: so that the house is now a square unpicturesque but solidly-built construction two storeys high, and with walls massive enough to resist the assault of anything but modern cannon. Here my friends had made their summer home, far

from all society and neighbours, to enjoy freedom, solitude, and the silence and charm of nature. There is no highway to lead the wandering tourist to their doors, . . . but the foot-passenger, with stout boots and country dress, is amply repaid for his walk, whether he come by the way of Podere Nuovo on the north, along a winding path through the woods, or by the monastery on the south, over a road commanding the loveliest and largest views of an exquisite and varied valley strown with far-gleaming villages and towns, bounded by swelling outlines of hills or mountains, one rising after another against the delicate sky."

My own most intimate recollection, from the greater part of a summer spent some years ago at this admirable altitude, is of the small settlement that at that time clustered about the old forest monastery, and the extent of the recent growth of which has been, I believe, much more marked than its felicity. The convent, grey and massive amid the murmurous green, and perched on its broad mountain-ledge, still squared itself like a fortress, but the good brothers had been expropriated and all but completely dispersed, with their foundation transformed into a State School of Forestry. About on the level of the convent was a small, decent hotel, the happiest

feature of which was a subsidiary guest-house or minor annexe, standing considerably higher up the mountain and having of old served as the *foresteria* of the convent, its place of reception for visitors. This interesting structure, which has of late become private property, formed of itself, in those days, an ideal mountain-inn, lifted above the small bustle of the little community, niched against its high background of wooded slopes and summits, with its ancient thick-walled cells making cool, clean rooms, and the small stone-paved terrace before it, propped upon the steep and guarded by a parapet, protruding into space like the prow of a ship. Here everything had poetry, but the fresh evenings, under the stars, had most. The outlook, by day, divine as the afternoon deepened, was the prospect Story perfectly describes. "There, far away in the misty distance, can be seen the vague towers and domes of Florence; and through the valley the Arno and the Sieve wind like silver bands of light, through olive-covered slopes and vineyards that lie silent in the blue haze of distance, spotted by wandering cloud-shades and taking every hue of changeful light from the pearly gleams of early morning to the golden transmutations of twilight and the deep intensity of moonlit midnight. Nearer,

magnificent chestnuts throng the autumnal slopes, their yellow leaves glowing in the autumn sun. Sombre groves of firs, marshalled along the hillsides for miles, stand solemn and dark. Beech-trees rear at intervals their smooth trunks, or gather together in close and murmurous conclave. The lower growth of gorse and broom and brush and feathered fern roughen the hills where the axe has bereft them of their forest-growth; and in every direction are wild and enchanting walks through light and shadow, alluring us on and on for miles. Here and there columns of wavering blue smoke tower and melt away into the blue sky, where the charcoal-burners are at work. Little brooks come trickling down at intervals, finding their devious way among the rocks and leaves and singing to themselves a slow and silvery song. Now and then a partridge whirs up beneath your feet, or a whistling woodcock suddenly takes flight, or a startled hare with up-cocked tail may be seen tilting through the underbrush, or a sly fox steals cautiously away."

Our friend gives the romantic history of the convent, founded in 1008 by the Florentine San Giovanni Gualberto, on his secession from the house of San Miniato with a view to a more rigorous life. But what more closely concerns us, and meets my own reminiscence, is the road

connecting Vallombrosa with Lago, the one road of approach, in his time, and commanding those "loveliest and largest views" his mention of which I have quoted. He vividly sketches it again, though inadvertently exaggerating its number of miles. This I used to find the direction to take, since I was so privileged, when the afternoon ramble was not preferably higher and higher, up through the shade, so clear as to be almost faintly blue, of the straight fir-woods, which left the belts of generous chestnut and mighty beech far below, and out upon the uncovered tops of the hills, where the cloudless air was cool, the great grassy hollows more violet than green, the far horizon, with its tinted lights, a warm shimmer of history, and the crown of the impression, when it was possible, a plunge of the eye and the imagination, from over some final buttress, down into the rich Casentino. The passage to Lago, level, after a short descent, along the sides of the heights, had more of the social motive, being both lonely and gay, like a woodman's song, and with no company by the way but that of the great friendly chestnuts and an occasional vast princely beech. Sociability was the end, was in the greeting and all the persuasion of the green cleared circle in the woods, where the rather dark-faced lodge kept

guard and the tea-hour, the hour of talk in the open, made for all gossip and gaiety one scarcely knew what murmurous undertone of tree-tops, of history again, of poetry, almost of melancholy. It was all so beautiful that it was sad—with a distinction the sense of which weighed like an anxiety. Something of that sort, something supreme in the solemn sweetness with which the whole place surrounded him, I can imagine our friend to have felt as he sat, with the last patience, in the September days, listening to its voices. They might have been saying to him how far he had come from the primary scene, and how much he had left by the way, as well as, indeed, how much he had found and laboured and achieved. They might, above all, have seemed to breathe upon him the very essence of the benediction of the old Italy he had chosen and loved and who thus closed soft arms about him. Death came to him, as with a single soundless step, early on the October morning, and, two days later (October 7th, 1895), he was laid to rest near his wife.

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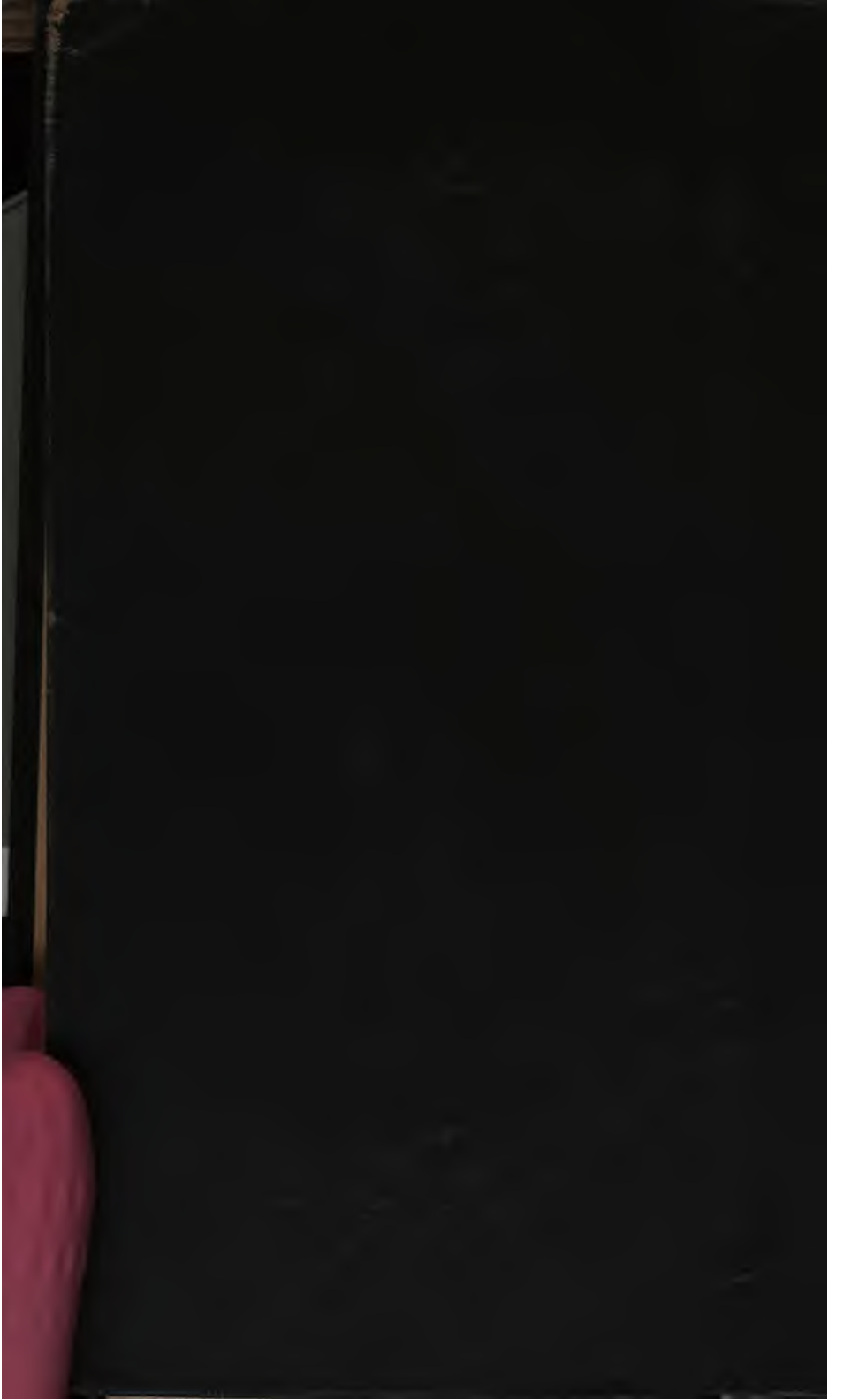
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